

SUDAN SAND



FATMA

SUDAN SAND

FILMING THE BAGGARA ARABS

BY

STELLA COURT TREATT

F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF "CAPE TO CAIRO"

*WITH SIXTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS*



GEORGE G. HARRAP & COMPANY LTD.
LONDON BOMBAY SYDNEY

First published 1930
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO, LTD.
39-41 Parker Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2

Printed in Great Britain by The Riverside Press Limited
Edinburgh

TO
C. T.
BLESS HIM!

FOREWORD

WE had been in England for two years, and during that time my husband¹ and my brother,² being bent upon an expedition to the Southern Sudan and on making a moving picture of the game there, had studied all the newest ideas in cinematography very thoroughly, and, since a 'story' is, in these days, essential as a peg upon which to hang an 'animal' picture, I had been busy on a 'plot' as my contribution to our equipment.

Behold us, therefore, going aboard ship at Southampton, armed with a scenario, cameras, thousands of feet of cinematograph film, stores of food, and a motor-lorry, as well as Kima, the small monkey who had been with us on our Cape-to-Cairo motor expedition.

It was a great moment when we felt the first turn of the ship's screw. The three of us thumped each other on the back and shouted "Hooray!"

We knew that we had a difficult time in front of us. There would be long days of heat, flies, and boredom, but Africa is a land of fascinating contrasts, and there would also be early dewy mornings in forest places, where birds chatter and dart, bright-winged, from tree to tree in search of red berries and golden fruit. We should listen to the

¹ Major C. Court Treatt.

² Errol Hinds. They are referred to in this book as "C.T." and "Errol" respectively.

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plovers shrilling their strange, weird note as they flew by in warm, scented nights, and we should hear the howling of hyenas, the roaring of prowling nocturnal lions. We should live beneath sunny skies—we should be stung to madness by mosquitoes! We should be imprisoned behind barriers of desert and forest—yet we should be free! Free!

That was the dream. We landed in due course at Port Sudan, and went as far as the railway could take us—to El Obeid. There we got down to the task. What an adventure it proved to be I have tried to tell in the following pages.

STELLA COURT TREATT

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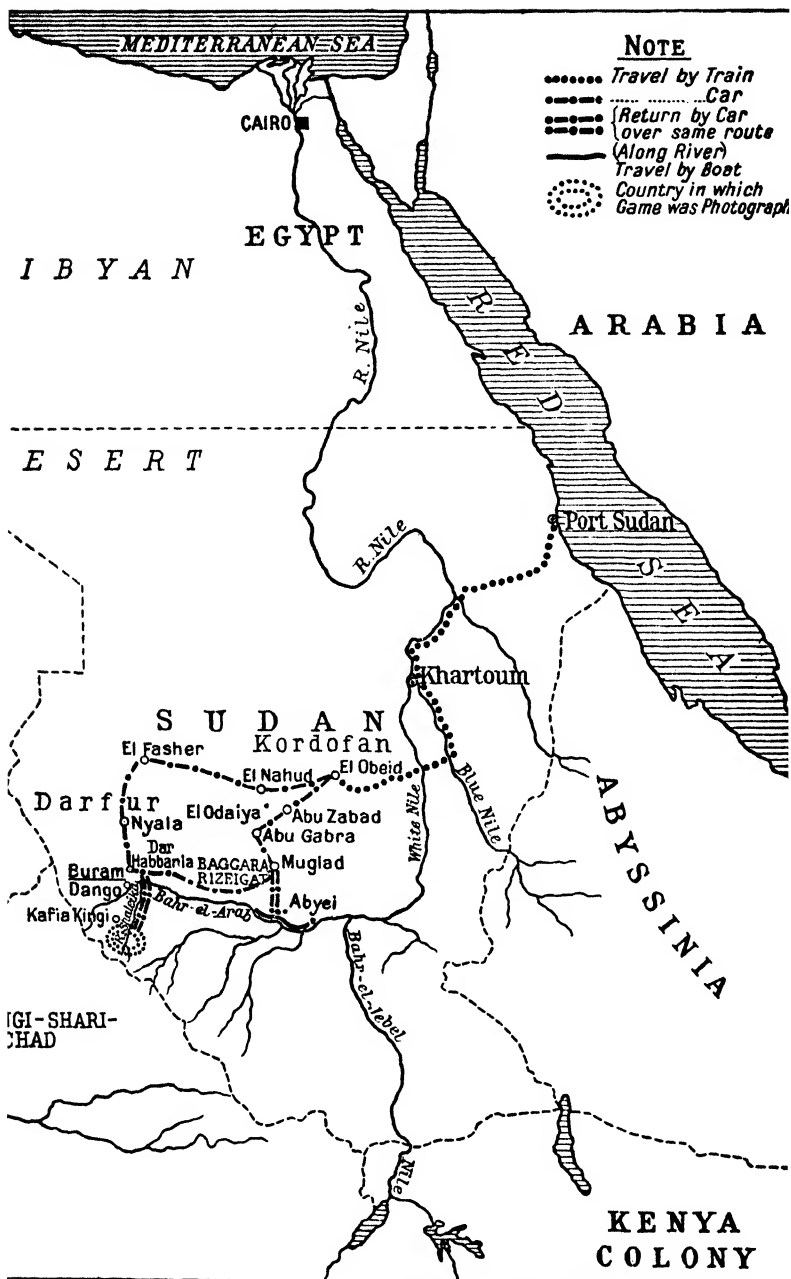
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CHAPTER I

THE FIRST STAGE

WE were surrounded by Arabs—we three and our Morris lorry, whose splendid name was *Star of the Desert*. We were leaving El Obeid, the outpost of comparative civilization and the end of the railway, some four hundred and thirty miles southwest of Khartoum. It is a large native centre and Government station, and is built on a flat, sandy waste. The native quarter is typical of Northern Africa, with its low mud houses and walls, but the Government station adjoining it strikes a note of contrast, with its comfortable white houses of the British officials. The sand round the car was strewn with our kit, which looked mountainous, but we had to take it all. It was mostly photographic material, because, of course, the aim of our journey was to make a cinematograph picture among the Arabs farther south.

We soon found that one car alone was inadequate to carry all the kit. We had perforce, therefore, to go in search of further conveyance, and by good fortune we secured two more cars without difficulty. I think there were round us quite a hundred noisy Arabs, who were all vastly intrigued. They were of all ages, sizes, and conditions. There was a woman with coffee in a *gabana*—rather good coffee.

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A long Arab on a short donkey had stopped to gape at us. Still we loaded up. Goodness knows, we looked as if we were to be out in Africa for ever—and important! We looked dreadfully important, with our masses of cameras, tripods, and things; but a white linen bag of washing flung down among the cameras rather smashed the effect. And, heavens! what a smell there was! There must have been several dead dogs lying about!

Those Sudanese seemed very black to my eyes, after being away from Africa for two years. Intermingled with the black there were people of lighter shades, looking almost lily-like in comparison. Some little Greek children were standing round, and among them a little pale brown imp of a girl, about five years old, with soft round eyes and silky curly hair tied up on top with a clean bright pink ribbon!

Our servants appeared to be satisfactory on the whole. Hassan, the head boy—a scoundrel, I felt—was chasing the others, whose names were Achmed, Yuma, Mohammed, and young Kasim, Hassan's own servant—a lad who will go far, for he has a 'way' with him! When I recall the scene I still see mugs and dishes, tripods, cook's boxes, petrol-tins, all sorts of things, *and* the washing, lying on the sand.

We were due to leave at sundown and travel by the light of the moon—an arrangement of which I was glad, as the daylight hours were as yet too hot for me to appreciate. The thermometer reached 110° nearly every day. While at El Obeid I had had sand-fly fever, and at this period I was feeling

THE FIRST STAGE

the heat rather badly. As a matter of fact, we had all had sand-fly fever—a nice cheery little illness, if you like, but I think I prefer measles!

Meanwhile an incredible person had arrived and was watching us. He was very long, his skin excessively black, and he was wearing whitish football stockings, very heavily striped in scarlet. He sported a wrist-watch also and carried a cane.

Farther on I caught sight of our ukuleles, looking rather out of place, on a heap of melons, waiting to be packed away somewhere on the already groaning car, on which the servants had perched themselves anywhere and everywhere ready for the start.

We got off just before sundown, leaving the noisy crowd behind, and watched with amusement the lazy dreamers and people on donkeys suddenly scuttle away to the side of the road when they realized that a car was behind them.

The road was fairly good, though the sand was deep in places. Here and there we passed camel caravans loaded with grain and bound for El Obeid, after journeying hundreds of miles from the south.

We travelled well. Our boats, which were lashed on top, on an iron platform running the whole length of the car, were quite secure, but it was only by a foot or so that we avoided the telegraph-lines as we passed beneath them.

The two other lorries were also loaded with our kit, for the heavy photographic material took up considerable space. Then there was the petrol and the food. But it was our intention to adopt bull-¹

¹ Bulls are used as beasts of burden in the Sudan.

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transport after we had reached Muglad, and by this means to relieve the compression.

Thus we journeyed until about 11.30 P.M., when the effects of a hard day in the blistering sun began to tell upon us, and we became too weary to go on.

With our mattresses and blankets placed upon the sand we lay down to sleep. And what peace was ours as we lay there in the moonlight!

The next day we reached Abu Zabad and lunched with the District Commissioner. Abu Zabad is a large Arab village built of red and drab-coloured mud, enclosing houses of many shapes and sizes. Round houses, square houses, and long houses—they are all low-to-the-ground houses. Dom palms are scattered here and there, and everywhere is sand, shining yellow in the glaring sun.

Journeying on, we came upon many fly-ridden places. But soon that thorn-tree country gave place to a land of huge tebel-di-trees.

It was always very hot during the day—the temperature still rising to somewhere about 110° during the hottest time of the day—and the comparatively cool evenings were a great relief to us.

We camped one night under a tebel-di-tree, as we wanted to photograph it the next day. The tebel-di is a quaint tree. When it is fully grown its trunk is enormous in circumference, and right at the top are huge, grotesque branches. The fruit is the cream-of-tartar pod. Inside the pod, adhering to the sides, is a white powder—the cream of tartar.

The Arabs use this tree for storing their water



TEBELDI-TREE



ABYEI DINKA

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during the dry season. During the rains they dig a kind of basin round the base, into which rain-water flows. They then collect the water in goatskins, and pour it into the hollow trunk through a hole made for the purpose. This water remains good, and fairly pure, during the dry season. The owner of a tree, when in need of water, lowers a goat-skin on a rope and thus bales out the trunk. Of course, these trees are the sacred property of the owners, and woe to him who purloins a drop of water therefrom!

You may see leaning against the *tebeldis* queer spiked poles, used as ladders by which to climb to the hole, high up in the trunk. Some of the people, when climbing, use ropes, slinging them up round the limbs of the *tebeldi* and swarming up hand over hand. It is extremely interesting to watch them climb.

At dawn the Arabs from the tiny poor-looking village near by appeared, and as soon as it was light enough C.T. and Errol photographed them getting water.

Muglad, our next important halt, is a large native settlement, cleared of all trees or herbage of any kind, and squats on the pale sand with its mud and grass-thatched houses, both circular and square. There were no white officials serving there when we passed through, and the Government work was being done by a Sudanese Mamur, or native Government officer.

On our arrival the Mamur, not content with placing at our disposal a certain circular thatched

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rest-hut, must send us, with true Arab hospitality, a sheep. The poor beast bleated in the most heart-rending way, and I reproached myself for eating meat.

Kima, the little blue monkey I had had for three years, and who had been one of 'us' on the Cape-to-Cairo motor journey, obviously had grown accustomed to being back in Africa, and spent his days eating dried dates, of which he was very fond, and playing with the Arab children. When he became too drowsy to eat or to play his head nodded sideways, and he would dab sleepily at the flies that worried his face.

Our own time was occupied in sorting out the boxes which were to go on by bull *hamla*,¹ so that we might make our way to the Bahr-el-Arab² in our Morris lorry as lightly laden as possible. We had to take all the cameras and film we could, of course, as well as some food and a few clothes.

There were letters also to be written, for we knew that many weeks—perhaps months—would elapse before we should have the opportunity to write again. We intended to leave just as the light crept in the next day for Abyei, at the Bahr-el-Arab. It was our plan to cruise up and down that river in search of game and river pictures. The native who was to accompany us from Muglad knew the country well, and told us that the game was beginning to move off, but that we should have about three weeks in which to get some before the rains came.

¹ Transport or caravan.

² River of the Arabs.

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We had tea with the Sudanese Mamur, whose manners were most charming, and with him we spent a delightful afternoon. He told us more interesting things about the Sudan in an hour than I had ever hoped to learn in years.

We seated ourselves outside his house on comfortable chairs drawn up to a table overloaded with cakes and tea. On the sandy ground were Sudanese camel-hair carpets, and over a couch was a splendid Persian one.

While we sat there an interesting old Arab happened along—a certain Hamid M'Burrub, who, five years ago, was a robber, murderer, and fugitive. He had eluded the Government for ten years in spite of his having been strenuously hunted.

The Mamur, pointing him out as he came in with a message, told me that the old man had been the head of a little clan of about ten or twelve men, who simply 'took' what they wanted from their more law-abiding neighbours. This rather likeable old rogue was reported to be in possession of some extremely useful and extensive knowledge of many things and peoples of the Sudan. The Government, therefore, wisely decided to make an ally of him, and news was spread that if old Hamid M'Burrub would present himself, and promise to live in peace with the Government in Muglad, all his past would be forgiven and forgotten. So, after a time of suspicion and holding back on the part of the old ruffian, in he came, and, with much talk and denial of guilt, swore allegiance to the Government. I watched him as he approached us—fine-looking,

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with a magnificent head and a white beard. In his hand he carried a long forked stick. He is, to-day, a very valuable man and a whole Secret Service bureau in himself.

It was he who, shortly before our arrival at Muglad, had 'guessed' who were the two murderers of a Rizeigat merchant who had been speared while lying asleep in the bush with his wife and camels. Surely enough the men, when caught, confessed to the murder—and their reason for it was very simple.

They were poor, they said; they had no money, they neither of them could afford to buy a wife, they had no camels—nothing. So of course they followed the man, and when he slept they speared him—"so" (with gesture). That was all—the Government must do what it liked about it. If they must die—"Inshalla—So be it."

They even went into the bush with the Mamur and some *askaris*, and showed them the actual 'scene of the crime,' explaining in great detail exactly how the deed had been done. Old man Hamid M'Burrudub mentioned, in passing, that these two scoundrels had been two of his best men "in the old days."

When we got back to our hut I was bitten by Kima. This was unprecedented behaviour. He had needed a slight beating. It was administered with a little stick. His fury aroused, he bounded forward and, snapping his chain, fastened on a finger of my left hand. I supposed it was the wild air of his native continent which had affected

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him, and I thought it best not to chastise Kima again!

We did not get off when the light crept in the next day, however, a whole day being spent in making ready. Twelve bulls, loaded up with the kit which we should require for our work, had started off the evening before. They made a picturesque cavalcade as they streaked off in the moonlight, with the Arabs and their women driving them on with words both of encouragement and abuse.

In fact, not until six o'clock did we leave Muglad, to battle our way through thick thorn-bush until noon, when we were obliged to camp because of damage to the radiator, caused by one of the thousands of small thorn-trees over which we had to drive. There was no other way. It was not worth while stopping to cut them down.

We had to send Hassan, the *askari*, who had been lent to us for the period of our needs, back to Muglad for the soldering materials. Luckily there was a village near by, where we borrowed a horse for him. It was about eighteen or twenty miles' ride to Muglad, so there we were—stranded until he returned!

Mishaps which would be easily remedied in England entail the most vexatious delay when they occur on trek in the 'blue.' However, one learns to make the best of things—to be philosophical.

The heat was not so oppressive that day, for there was a breeze blowing, and I expected that it would rain during the night. We were without our tent. It was on one of the bulls in the *hamla*,

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going down to the river. Of course it did rain a little. . . .

It was not until early on the following morning that the *askari* arrived with some soldier, and two hours later a man on a bull appeared with some other tools which Hassan could not carry.

C.T. and Errol got to work, but it was not easy to mend a honeycomb radiator in the bush without proper tools.

I watched—and waited. There were trees round us, but they did not offer much shade. Their foliage was not quite out, although there were a few which were covered with bushy green leaves.

During this wait I had time to reflect on the water question, which was rather a problem just there. Pools were not lacking, but they were all noisome. The water tasted and smelled putrid, even after boiling. I had so come to associate a bad odour with it that I astonished Achmed when one day I absently asked, after drinking some soda-water, “Achmed, with what smell did you fill the soda-water bottle to-day?”

It was also during this delay on the road that we learned a most cunning method for clearing muddy water. Akasia, the guide we had with us, demonstrated when some particularly loathsome liquid came in. He stirred it round and round with a piece of white bark, then let it settle, and lo! in about an hour the water was quite clear. Not crystal clear, but clear enough. The tree is known simply as *shadara beda*, which means “white tree.” We walked a few yards outside camp to

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see it. It was a rather slim, smooth, white-barked tree, with branches laden with small, smooth green leaves.

Evening came, and, as the repairing of the radiator had not been completed, we went for a walk after the sun got low. It was extremely pleasant, and such a blessed relief after the heat of the long day to get a breath of cooler air. Kima loped by our heels, loving it too.

The damaged radiator took C.T. and Errol some two days to repair, but the job looked beautifully done.

Just as we were leaving one of the visiting villagers appeared quite casually with a gaping wound on his leg. He didn't seem to mind in the least, and when he saw one of C.T.'s cigarette-papers lying on the ground he requested the cook to lick it and dab it on to the place affected. A quaint idea of first aid!

There were small worries over ration questions. The lime juice was almost finished, and we could not have another bottle until Saturday—or was it Friday? For, according to our rationing, we allowed ourselves only one bottle a week. The same limitation applied to pickled walnuts, which we all adored.

Early that morning, however, Errol shot a gazelle and two brace of guinea-fowl, so we did well, everything considered.

It is true that the radiator soon developed another leak, but that was remedied once and for all when a happy plan suggested itself to C.T., whereby a

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criss-cross wooden screen lashed on to the front took all the crashes.

We were informed by Arabs on their way from the Bahr-el-Arab that there had been no real rain up to that time, and that it was still quite dry down at the river. The rains that had fallen a short time since had merely been the first-quarter-of-the-moon rains.

Before long signs of the forest appeared : we were really beginning to enter the wilds ! How lovely it was to hear 'night noises' once again—hyenas and jackals howling in a stirring chorus, and always a myriad vultures hovered round. I supposed that something had died out in the bush when, late one afternoon, for no apparent reason, quite suddenly all the vultures cleared off after having haunted the camp at excessively close range all day.

Every day brought us to understand our 'boys' better. There was our cook—his name Markoum—altogether queer. His hands were queer, his face and legs were queer—he walked with a queer long camel gait, with his long arms waving at his sides queerly, and his hands projected fantastically. On his large face he wore the expression of a miserable camel. I once chanced to remark to Hassan : " Our cook has a sad face. Does he ever sing or dance ? " To the boys this appeared to be irresistibly funny, and provided entertainment for the day.

We often lost articles from our personal kits. Errol would want to know who stole his soap-box. My home-made monogram was on mine, so that was safe. It was curious how things did eventually



OUR LORRY WITH THREE MOTOR-BOATS STACKED ALOFT



LITTLE ARAB GIRL DRESSED UP IN HER MOTHER'S HEADDRESS
AND AMBER BEADS

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turn up in somebody else's belongings, *quite* casually, of course. After a time one became hard and sceptical in that rough-and-ready life—and even began to wonder whether it was safe to use one's own "brush of the teeth," as Achmed called it.

My abiding memory of that stage of our wanderings is the pink and purple sunsets. I loved, too, to watch the women coming in with pots of water on their heads, at our various halts, dark, graceful silhouettes moving against a sky which was a riot of colour.

We had every need of those intervals of peace to mitigate the trials of the road. Three inboard, three-ply wooden-bodied boats were lashed on to the iron frame above the car, so it can be imagined how hard it was to make a way through the tall-tree country which we came to. Overhead, arches of branches made the going almost impossible. We had to stop every few yards for the boys to get out and chop them down. Then there were the thousands of small thorn-bushes, which were just too small to bother about, and over which the lorry had to go. It was rather alarming to hear the noise they made underneath the car as she staggered over them: a kind of tearing, crashing noise. Our faces and arms and legs were slapped by thorny branches which the lorry thrust aside and which came back at us spitefully.

Still, it was a change to get into bush-country after the sand of Port Sudan, Khartoum, and El Obeid. And the farther south we went the more beautiful and green the country became. There

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were stretches of green grass, and although the 'road' was a mere footpath made by Arabs trekking on their camels and bulls, and we could travel but slowly, I thought that it was the most glorious country I had seen for some time, and perhaps the most beautiful in Africa. The improvement came slowly. We saw lovely patches of green, green grass, shaded by huge leafy trees. Then we would happen upon a pool fringed with trees, like an aquamarine set in emeralds. Everywhere were "bosky dells." It was amazing and unexpected.

There were signs of game, and consequently we hoped for lions. Our delight, however, was slightly damped by terrific rainstorms. The rain seemed to come down in solid walls of water. Of course our beds, as well as ourselves, always got drenched.

I am going to make extracts from my diary to give you an idea of what we saw and did.

"*On the road near Abyei. Sunday, May 13, 1928.*— We are anchored here for a few hours. C.T. is in agony with a scorpion bite. He was putting on his mosquito boots this morning and was stung on the ankle. I am sitting by him putting hot compresses on to it, in the little bivvy we made with a sail-cloth against the car. He would not let me lance the bite and insert permanganate, which is *the* only thing to do for scorpions. It is a nasty place for a sting, it's true, because the ankle seems to be a network of veins. If you have never been the victim of a scorpion's sting you can know nothing of the liquid fire which it shoots into your tortured flesh.

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“*Later.*—C.T. is in less pain now. Poor man! he has had a bad time. Kima, on the other hand, is very contented and happy, for there are grasshoppers to eat, and shady trees in which to leap.

“We are eleven people, counting odd Arabs, guides, and servants. How the Morris carries the huge load and the eleven people beats me. The boys look like a box of dates, so closely are they packed in the body of the car.

“Errol has been mending a puncture again. These tyres are not like our beloved old double cords of the Cape-to-Cairo journey. We mend, on an average, three punctures a day.

“One disadvantage of this green grass and tree-country is that flies and mosquitoes are legion. There are masses of little black house-fly-looking ‘people’ who sting like mosquitoes, especially through woolly stockings, which is so amazing. They get a purchase with their back legs in the wool, and then dive down into suffering legs with the gusto of *gourmands*.

“We have, thanks to the Arabs, discovered a rare and exotic fruit, which tastes rather like *lychees* (goodness knows how you spell that!—it’s Chinese or Japanese, anyhow), only rather more delicious, with a slightly, only slightly, more acid tang to it. It’s simply divine—the skin is smooth and tulip-yellow, the fruit inside clings, *lychee*-like, to a round stone. The Arabs call this fruit *haamed*. I spell all these names phonetically, as there is no other way that I know of spelling them. It is even difficult getting the right *sound* of some of the words,

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because these people have slight differences of pronunciation.

"It is always hot, with threatening rain-clouds in the sky. We had rain last night.

"We hope to reach Abyei an hour or two after we leave here. The river is about fifteen miles beyond that. We shall make our base camp at Abyei, and trek off from there for spells on the river in boats. God help us then—the mosquitoes and hippo flies will surely run wild when they see us! It always means flies and all stinging things in good game-country. The two go together, as if to balance things up a bit, for are we not always told that one *can't* have everything? *And* don't we realize it?

"*Later, 5.40 P.M.*—We did not get very far to-day. Left the last camp at 2 P.M. and halted here at 3.30 P.M. No petrol. Not another drop on the car. We have sent the guide on to Abyei to fetch some from the store we sent down on bulls. Incidentally the bulls have reached Abyei before us. The reason is not hard to find. Our car is hopelessly heavy with boats, engines, kit, etc., and our progress has been no faster than that of a fleet of snails, to say nothing at all about the stops for radiator trouble, punctures, and photography.

"C.T.'s foot is still awfully painful.

"The ground, for the last few days, has been very soggy, and we have to dig the wheels out of mud rather often.

"But what a glorious green the grass is! It is

THE FIRST STAGE

long, soft, and wavy, and when the wind blows through it it simply ripples and glows in the sunlight.

"The boys are busy putting up our little tarpaulin shelter. They are quaint souls and extremely slow. It is taking exactly three of them to make a hole in the quite soft ground for one of the poles. Our bed and tent boys, Achmed and Juma, are pretty good. Achmed especially is a treasure, and knows a little English. He understands it quite well, but does not speak much. Thus, you can imagine with what astonishment I hear him come out with things like 'Him have no savvy' and 'Kima is windy of big bird.'

"We cannot be far from Abyei now.

"Errol is cleaning his gun, with his hair standing straight up on end. C.T. is lying on his bed under his green mosquito-net, gazing up into the tangle of green branches above his head, and Kima is chewing at young shoots growing round his own particular tree.

"I am scribbling, perched up on somebody's valise, so good night everybody.

"*Monday, May 14.*—The petrol arrived early this morning, and we left about eight o'clock, reaching Abyei about noon, after ploughing through soft ground. I politely refused to sleep in an old Dinka hut, as I know only too well the danger of sleeping in old huts in which goats or anything else may have sheltered. There is also the danger of getting jiggers and things in your feet from contact with the dirty sand."

SUDAN SAND

Thus it was that we reached our first objective—Abyei.

We had intended to make our base camp at this place—before we had seen it—but, having inspected it, we decided to push on to the river, to submit down there to whatever the rain might have in store for us. After we had fixed up our temporary camp the rain came down rather like a water-spout. The ground was oozing mud, and, looking at it, I prayed to heaven to help us during the coming weeks!

At a certain time of the year two District Commissioners meet at Abyei, as it is on the boundary of their districts. These meetings have been the means of teaching little Dinka boys to play a fast game, a kind of polo on foot. They use neat little hockey-like sticks, wielding them with skill and alive to the importance of the occasion. We watched them one evening flying over their cleared 'polo' space, clicking the ball, a palm-nut, with their sticks, and shrieking imprecations at each other as they sped by. You can only realize the spectacle they presented when you reflect that the Dinkas are one of the most savage and unknown tribes left in Africa. They are stark naked: men, young women, and children. Only the married women wear skin aprons. The men stalk about with spears in their hands, hunting sometimes, but usually staying at home and herding their cattle. Kwol Arob, the chief of these N'Gork Dinkas at Abyei, and a quaint soul, was the solitary exception to the general nudity. Somebody had persuaded him to don

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THE FIRST STAGE

garments, and you could see that he hated them. The queerest sight of all was his footgear. He had large, very large, boots, which he wore unlaced, and in which he did look so uncomfortable, poor man! He sometimes wore an old pith helmet. It seems that to possess a helmet is the height of a man's ambition. It is a sign of his superiority, his 'man-of-the-worldness.'

The Dinkas of the village, like all their race, were long and extremely thin people—and quaint. We wanted some of our loads carried down to the river, and as the bulls could not be used on account of the fly down there at this time of the year, the Dinkas offered to carry them on their heads—with the reservation that they could not carry very heavy loads, because they are so long and thin in the legs that if they did their legs would bend!

We saw heaps of game on our way to the river, and large lion spoor which was very fresh and therefore encouraged us, but the flies were a scourge. Brutal things they were, biting us almost to pieces, and buzzing in myriads.

One of the Arabs once approached us during a halt and, noticing how many flies were settled on the car, remarked that "The flies must surely think that it is an elephant." Certainly she did look like some huge grey beast with the boats perched up aloft, and flies, who love the enormous playground of an elephant's back, might well have mistaken her for a new type of pachyderm.

I began to doubt whether we were justified in making the long and hard journey to the Bahr-el-Arab

SUDAN SAND

at that time of the year, just on the razor-edge of the rains, which I was afraid had commenced already. The game had undoubtedly left, but certainly we could hope for useful river-pictures, because there were crocodiles and hippos. But I feared that if we stayed down at the river we should be marooned. There were stretches of bog-country surrounding us which, when thoroughly wet, not even a bull would be able to cross. We should have to turn back soon after we had taken those river-pictures, and hang on to the bulls to help to get our things back.

And there was a "native question" too!

A great many Dinkas had come here to the river, and all of them insisted upon shaking hands—at any rate, all those who were head men, or friends of head men!

One of them, wearing a bandana handkerchief on his head—I wondered if he had got it from one of our servants—was the most persistent handshaker it has ever been my lot to endure. His hands were *too* dirty, really—I retreated into the tent every time he came near the camp.

For solace and amusement I adopted a strange pet—a fine little crowing cockerel whose life I saved from the cook. I noticed the poor dear, tied up by the feet, arriving on one of the bulls, with his head down. Cruel brutes, natives! I immediately had him released, and named him Adolph. His coat was a kind of black and ginger, and his crow the next morning about four o'clock sounded quite barn-yardy, and homey, and unsavage.

THE FIRST STAGE

We had a pretty camp among the trees on the north bank of the river, and entered on a short period of nomad domesticity, not, however, devoid of little troubles. For instance, when the boys were washing our clothes Achmed informed me with a pleased grin that *all* the soap had been left behind at Muglad. I found enough for that wash, but wondered what we should do for the next, and until we could get some down from Muglad.

The rain, however, promised to do all the washing. It poured one day, and threatened to do the same again the next. The lightning during these storms was terrific. Certainly the tents were up, and they were useful, but, like all tents, they were hot and heavy, and scarcely paid for the nuisance they were when loading.

Serious work began with our taking cinematograph pictures of the boats being unloaded, of various types of Dinkas, and sundry 'shots' of the river. Then C.T. and Errol put the engines in the boats and went upstream, while I stayed behind to look after camp. Some Arabs and a jabbering mob of Dinkas kept me company. Nor should I have minded them much if one of the Arabs, whom I disliked and distrusted, hadn't hung about suspiciously, finally producing a tiny cut on his finger, which a child would have ignored, with a request that I should put *dawa*¹ on it and bandage it up for him! I blazed furious eyes at him and he retired.

There was no game in the neighbourhood, but on the previous day the Dinkas had killed a hippo

¹ Medicine.

SUDAN SAND

some miles down the river—a good sign—and we hoped to be able to locate some more for our cameras.

The bull *hamla* that had brought our loads down returned to Muglad, taking a chit to the Mamur asking for another to be sent down to help us to get back. These particular Arabs would not stay any longer with their animals because of fly. The annoying fellow with the cut finger was sent back with them. I watched them go with mixed feelings.

It was clear to us that we too should have to get away very soon if we were to avoid being bogged completely. In the meantime it was a case of making hay, or rather getting our work done, while the sun was shining.

Anyhow, the preliminary canter was over. We had definitely arrived on the first of our chosen scenes of action.

CHAPTER II

THE SHINING RIVER OF THE ARABS

WHILE the sun was shining," did I say? Well, I have witnessed every manner of storm, but never any so ruthless as those which we experienced at the Bahr-el-Arab. Forked lightning would flash madly, and thunder rip and roar until the earth seemed to tremble. I marvelled that our tent-ropes could withstand the frenzy of the swirling, rushing wind. The rain, starting with ordinary separate drops, would fall faster and faster in a swift crescendo and culminate in a deluge, when the whole sky seemed to be a suddenly tipped-over basin emptying its full contents upon the astonished earth. While that first basin was emptying others were being tipped over, and we were deafened with a succession of horizon-wide cascades. It was just a succession of bangs as the water met the ground. When these storms had subsided, everything, including us, was flattened out. We were almost dazed. And then the sun would shine hotly, and we could get things fairly dry again.

However, we settled down to a routine of work, and the days sped by on the waters and the banks of that silky river.

One of the amenities of the camp was a place, or structure, to which we gave the elegant appellation of "the bathroom." It consisted of four crooked,

SUDAN SAND

crazy-looking posts stuck into the ground, forming a small square, draped with odd bits of sail-cloth and sacking. Standing in this bathroom, you were amazed to see that some of your person protruded below the lower edge of the flapping 'walls' and that your head and shoulders were visible above. You had a mental picture of yourself, and were staggered to think how funny you must look with bits of you showing, and a hat, set rakishly at an angle, topping the whole effect. Then you sat down and felt utterly ridiculous, wearing a hat in your bath. You could hardly move in this cramped space for fear of scorpions or spiders that perhaps had nested in the folds of the old sail-cloth and sacking sides. You got the whole bathing process over as quickly as you could, and would then step on to the soap and slither half-way out of the bathroom madly clutching at something—anything—in your rush through the mud on to your back, finding when you came to that you had completely dismantled this bathroom. Then you started all over again!

I recollect a night of alarums and excursions. A howling gale had sprung up, followed by a deluge of rain and crashing thunder and lightning. Lying in my narrow bed, I was wondering how many scorpions were in it and where the tent-pole would hit me when the tent blew down, when presently I heard mysterious voices approaching in the gale-battered night. Much nearer they came, and I began to fear that the Dinkas had come for trouble. I had a kind of Dinka 'complex' in those days, and

THE SHINING RIVER

did not like them. After what seemed ages I heard the blessed and well-known voice of Hassan saying something, which took a load off my mind, and C.T., who had gone out, asking what all the noise was about. Hassan had a covey of Dinkas at his heels. I report the conversation which took place between C.T. and Hassan.

HASSAN. "*Sartel Bey*, these men they have come from the chief [Kwol Arob, whose village was miles off], who says that the *dawa* you gave him for his wife's eyes she has drunk, and now he says that she is poisoned and she is dying in very great agony."

(That made me somewhat anxious, because these Dinkas are rather irrational savages. I saw visions of the woman dying and her death being laid at our door.)

C.T. "Oh, rot!—that was only boracic lotion. Tell these people to go back to the chief and say that she must not persuade herself into dying, because the stuff is harmless."

Hassan retired, to return later with news that the chief's messengers could not be found! They had gone to cover in one of the numerous huts, where other Dinkas lived, about 100 yards off.

Things had to be left at that, and I wondered what the chief would think when it became apparent that his men were not returning.

They made their appearance the next morning, and took two soda-mints and a soothing message back to the chief. We heard some days later that the chief's wife had not died, but, on the contrary, was much better!

SUDAN SAND

Such incidents made up our camp life. As for our work, here is a description of a typical busy day.

We started off in two boats, C.T. and a few boys in one, and Errol and I with three boys in the other. Errol and I had previously arranged to go up the river as far as would leave us time to get back to camp by dark. C.T. was going up only for about seven miles, when he would stop, go ashore, and set up cameras for crocodile.

I cannot adequately describe the beauty of the Bahr at the beginning of the rainy season, just when there has been enough rain to make all the grass long and green and the trees bright with lovely new leaves. On both banks there were trees of every kind, shape, and size. Green reeds and rushes fringed the shore, and great birds strutted everywhere. There were herons, storks, pelicans, guinea-fowl, game birds without number, and high up in the branches huge fish-eagles were perched, looking solemn and exactly like lawyers in white wigs and black gowns. There were snowy tick-birds—cattle egrets—everywhere, and little fat grey doves looking quite blue in the sunlight. Thousands of gorgeous, brightly feathered little creatures flitted about like butterflies, and settled in gaudy clouds on bushes growing right on the edge of the bank.

Our motor-boat had an awning overhead, and travelled about twelve miles an hour, when she didn't 'phut' out with water in the carburettor or in the magneto. She was very flimsy to look at, but quite strong with her three-ply-wood body, and

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THE SHINING RIVER

I utterly refused to think of hippo capsizing us into those crocodile-infested waters.

On and on we went, the river winding ahead of us like the proverbial silver ribbon, and in our wake wriggle upon wriggle of wiggly wavelets. Cotton-wool clouds made pictures on the dazzling blue of the sky, and little puffs of wind stirred the reeds where the big white and yellow water-lilies grew in a riot of beauty. The river's sides were trimmed with them as far as the eye could see. Big, flat leaves floated on the surface, with the glowing lilies thrusting their heads above them.

Almost everywhere dark objects, which looked like logs of wood, were floating idly about, leaving in their wake a thin, flat spiral of water, and we knew that they were crocodiles, especially when the boys called out excitedly, "*Timsah!*"¹ *Timsah* they were, sure enough, and when they raised their ugly heads out of the water we saw their tiny bullet eyes.

Long, straight-looking posts on the banks resolved themselves into Dinkas, standing like statues, with their long spears held blade upward, and with their curious oblong cowhide stools, which look like roly-poly puddings, grasped in the same hand. There is a hole in this stool through which the fingers are thrust. Otherwise, I am sure, they would be extremely awkward to hold.

We saw dom palms looking romantic and 'sheikh-film-like,' and always the water-birds standing on long, long legs sadly picking up grubs, and crocs oilily gliding past, too lazy to snap into their jaws

¹ Crocodile.

SUDAN SAND

the pink fish which leaped in and out of the water. Turning the most violent flip-flaps sometimes, these fish would land with a crash on the side of the boat, or even inside, to the sudden and great alarm of the whole crew.

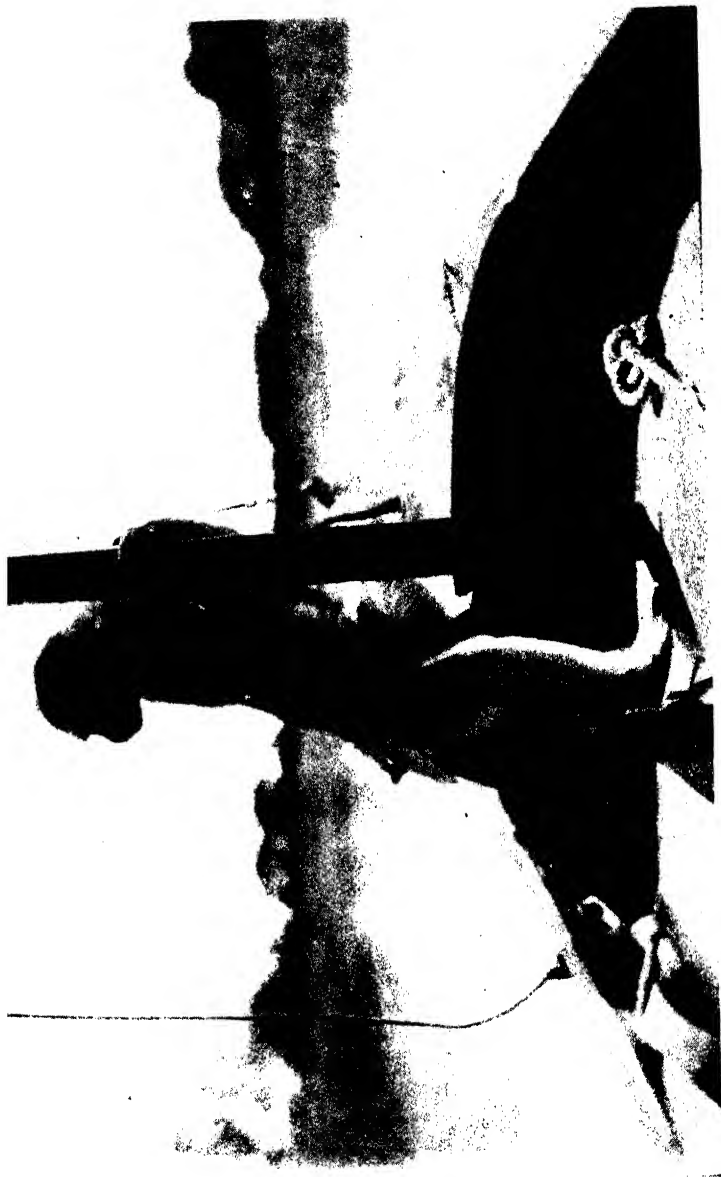
A propos of these fish, upon another day, when C.T., Errol, and I were on the river, we were all surprised to hear a resounding *blip* and to see Errol's helmet flying off into the stream. Errol's face was a study in amazed expression. What had happened was that a fish had shot out of the water, and, finding Errol's hat in his path, had removed the obstruction forthwith. We cruised after the hat, which had a perfectly uncanny knack of eluding all our efforts to capture it. As the boat approached the hat would swirl off in another direction. After some anxious and futile attempts we eventually rescued it, but only just as it was filling with water and about to sink.

However, to return to the events of the day which I had begun to describe, the river streamed out behind us in a succession of zigzagging curves, varied by occasional reaches perfectly straight, and maybe a mile long. It was very broad in parts, about 100 to 150 yards wide, but the average was about thirty to forty yards.

Leaving C.T. to his job, we travelled some thirty miles upstream, and then turned back after we had eaten some sandwiches and drunk cold tea out of our water-bottles.

We landed at odd times to photograph things, and sometimes, having made vain attempts to get

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KIMA NAVIGATING THE BAHR-EL-ARAB



OUR LITTLE CAMP ON THE BAHR-EL-ARAB

THE SHINING RIVER

the engine restarted after one of the 'phuts' of which I spoke, we were compelled to land to blow into the jets of the carburettor, in an effort to clear out the water.

The old Arab hunter sitting in the prow implored us to stop on one occasion to shoot a great bustard for his dinner, but instead of bringing down the bird, we ourselves were attacked violently by bees. One of the natives started the trouble after we landed, because he would insist upon waving his arms, rushing about, and yelling at the top of his voice, with the result that the wretched bees became infuriated, and simply flew at us and stung with all their might. I saw clouds of them on everybody, and yell after yell rang out as sting after sting penetrated tortured anatomies. I was luckier than the others, sustaining only two stings, and those in my hair. Meanwhile Errol was yelling: "Get back into the boat, quick!" The natives thereupon came tumbling in. No boat was ever more in danger of capsizing. All the while arms were thrashing the bee-infested air. It was like a nightmare. Errol, up to his waist in the river, was simply covered with bees. He scrambled into the boat somehow, and we let that engine all out. After a few minutes the last of the bees flew off—that is, all those that weren't lying dead or dying in the boat.

The whole thing was so ludicrous that Errol and I were almost helpless with laughter. We got the boat to the opposite bank and landed the natives, who lay about moaning and groaning. Then we took a knife and began to scrape the stings off

SUDAN SAND

everybody's face. I'm sure Errol had a dozen or more on his face alone, and the boys looked as if they had white whiskers; so numerous were the stings on their cheeks. The sight we presented to C.T. when we joined him later on must have been astounding—a procession of faces resembling the grotesque balloons that you blow up at Christmas-time. How I escaped amazes me, for I was in the very thick of it. There must be a great deal of truth in the old adage about the devil looking after his own.

C.T. had enjoyed more dignified experiences. He had shot a croc. He had waited all day to photograph him, and as the old brute never would come right out, he had bagged him at sundown.

C.T. had found a good croc and hippo 'location,' so Errol and I returned alone, arriving at the camp about 7 P.M. We found it ticklish work steering the boat round the many reedy curves of the river, and the engine kept giving trouble, but we got some good river-pictures. On our way we went ashore and spent some time photographing a band of monkeys at play in some big trees. Kima, who was with us, was quite thrilled to see so many creatures just like himself. He called to them and chattered excitedly. The wild ones peered at him and didn't seem to be at all afraid of us.

The heat that day had been intense, and we were ready to welcome the wind which sprang up the next morning. It was so refreshing after the succession of still, hot days we had had. Kima, seemingly remembering that he had seen some

THE SHINING RIVER

monkey pals the day before, kept on sending out plaintive calls to them.

But the peace, delightful as it was, had some slight drawbacks.

I thought that Rhodesia was the worst country on earth for scorpions until I had experience of this part of the Bahr-el-Arab. There were literally crowds of them everywhere, and centipedes as well. Everything we picked up, especially shoes and clothes, had to be thoroughly shaken. Each day somebody came up to be treated for a sting. The Dinkas were an absolute nuisance. We seemed to spend our spare time doctoring them.

We had revelations, also, of the secrets of insect life, and our experiences were amazing, if not amusing. One morning I found in my diary a colony of large red ants complete with large eggs. I was astonished when I opened it to see them all come swarming out of it. I had left my pen in between the leaves, and they had marched in through the gap it made.

When I spent part of a morning writing I worked to the accompaniment of noises which sounded as if there was a perpetual game of cricket in progress. I could hear a click every few seconds, for all the world as if a cricket-ball were being hit. The causes of the sound were the fish, that would jump out of the river, catch flies, and then crash back. They were rather pretty pinky-grey creatures.

Thus the days slipped by. Barely a month had passed since the day when we had left El Obeid, and yet, at times, it seemed as if we had been all

SUDAN SAND

our lives with these naked Dinkas and wild river-birds.

Some of the bulls which we had asked for arrived in due course from Muglad one morning. Others were to follow on the morrow, when we hoped to receive some mail.

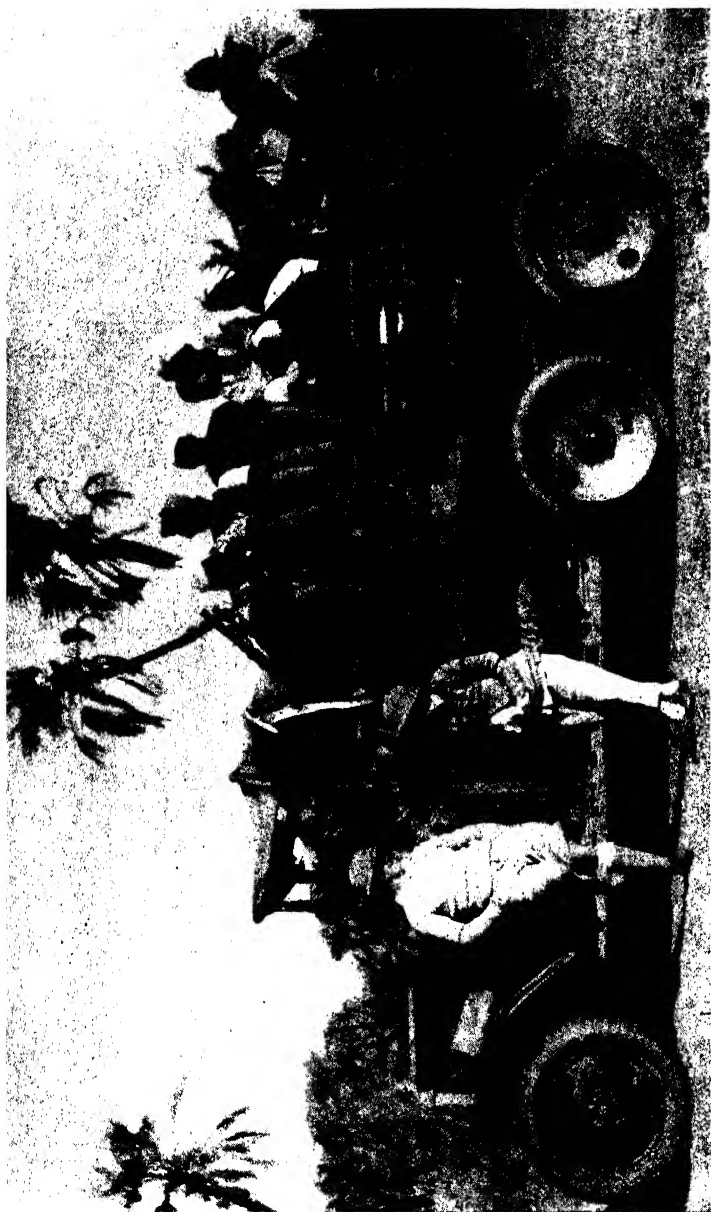
C.T., who had gone off on his long and lone excursion, returned one evening with some good hippo film. He had come upon a herd of the huge beasts in a certain part of the river, and had got very close to them. He had not taken enough food to last the four days he was away, and he informed us that he had lived on "some old high goat and bird-seed." He had forgotten to take his shot-gun, and had not, in any case, intended to take a rifle, for his excursion had been planned to last only for a day, or, at the most, two days.

Some time before we had planned a jaunt to photograph crocodile. This would have to be undertaken quickly, before the rains could trap us. Luckily the trip turned out to be highly successful. The beasts were shy, and did not come right out on to the banks until about 5 P.M., and then only for very short periods. They would sprawl about, flip their tails a little, yawn, and then glide back into the water again.

I had to wait until the last minute for a shot, for fear of scaring them all away, and we were on the point of starting back home again when I sighted the rifle on a creature on the opposite bank, just as he was gliding head foremost into the water. I caught him right in the brain, causing him to do a back somersault, and he slid into the water dead.



A DINKA FAMILY



THE SHINING RIVER

My shot frightened all the others unfortunately, and they did not rise to give anyone else a shot. My victim was biggish and ugly-looking.

When we got back at 9 P.M. I was thoroughly worn out, and feeling very ill. I'd got the "great pains," as Achmed put it, in my limbs, and felt exceedingly 'nervy.' Perhaps the numerous thunderstorms which had occurred of late would account for this.

In our absence the rest of the bulls had arrived from Muglad, with such things as petrol—and mail. There were letters from the mothers, and all our friends wrote too. It was simply lovely to have news from dear old London again, although it seemed a trifle incongruous to see, in the mind's eye, pictures of people who were living such different lives from ours, camped as we were on the Bahr-el-Arab, listening to strange birds' shrill calls, and surrounded by naked men stalking about with spears.

During this time in camp we began seriously to consider the question of our escape before the weather finally broke. We feared—the moon was getting into the last quarter—that on the road we should have a troublesome time from rain, and consequent mud, if we did not move at once. But there were still a few pictures of the river to be taken before we could go. We knew that we were taking grave risks, but we took them light-heartedly. I confided to my diary: "Adolph [the cockerel] is taking grave risks too. He struts past Kima, who makes dabs at the few remaining feathers of his tail."

CHAPTER III

MUD

OUR anxiety over the weather was justified. Rain fell heavily the night before we left the river, and we expected the road to be muddy. We started off in the afternoon, after a morning which had kept everybody busy rushing about getting the loads packed and distributed for the bull-transport.

My joints were so sore that I could hardly move. It was possibly due to camping on wet ground.

Mosquitoes were becoming very active, and the departure from the river did not lessen our discomfort, because the rain had enabled the larvæ to hatch out all over the country. We passed some Dinka villages, and got some pictures of Dinkas standing among their cattle, veiled in the smoke rising from dozens of cow-dung fires in front of their huts, and the grass walls surrounding their little village. Although we found the ground very swampy when we came to make our camp at night, we had begun with an extremely successful day. Only one tyre had burst, and the going had not been unduly wet. We took a different path from the one we had followed down to the Bahr, and our progress was infinitely better. There were fewer thorn-trees, no boats packed up aloft to weigh us down, and much more of our kit had been sent on by bull.

We had left the boats safely stacked on a high

MUD

platform, in the Dinka village, roofed over with good thick thatching, to remain there until we wanted them later on, after the rains. We should then send a *hamla* for them to meet us at another part of the river.

One fresh item, however, was included in our baggage, the skin of my crocodile, which the Dinkas had brought into camp. It was all that was left of the croc—fish and other crocodiles had eaten the rest of him before he floated up.

There was a good moon just at that time, which was an advantage in cases of enforced late travelling in threatening weather, and we could reasonably hope to win through to Muglad in a few days. But hopes are vain things. The journey took us weeks.

The country occasionally was glorious and park-like, with great trees and green grass, and sometimes we would come to places where millions of lilies and other flowers of many kinds were blooming. Among them were some white ones, which somewhat resembled snowdrops, and when the bells on the little stems were larger and more numerous they looked like freesias.

But it was hard and uninteresting work battling through the thick, high bush. You must understand that there were *no roads* at all from the Bahr-el-Arab to Muglad. Faint cattle spoor formed a kind of pathway, and that was what we called the 'road.'

Heavy rain-clouds continually banked up in the sky, threatening worse things to come, but in spite of it all we learned to keep and cultivate a sense of humour. I recorded in my diary that C.T.'s hair

SUDAN SAND

needed cutting, and that Adolph, being an insane bird, insisted upon crowing at the oddest times of the day or night. One had to make the most of the lighter side of things, for the ground was exceedingly soft; we continually sank axle-deep into mud, and the car had to be 'block-and-tackled' out of these appalling beds. When this happened in the late afternoon there was nothing for it except to order Achmed and Juma, the boys, to make camp. Once, having struck a very bad patch, we sent a boy on to Muglad for some petrol, as the Mamur had sent us only six drums instead of ten, and, with our last gallon, we managed to get the car out of the 'stick'—after much digging and laying down of branches—on to higher and drier ground. We made a shelter—four poles stuck into the ground with branches laid across the top to form a roof, to shield us from the hot sun—and awaited the boy's return.

Errol and I went after buck for food, but buck-hunting held no attractions for us. It is such tame sport, unless you have to work very hard for it.

To fill in the time I gave Kima a bath. He looked simply lovely after it, with all his grey fur fluffed out. His little face, being sunburnt, was blacker than ever. He *did* so love being back in Africa. I also cut C.T.'s hair, which had worried me for days, and made him look quite smart, and then we all went out and shot teal, and had an extremely good dinner afterward.

Later on in the evening the bulls arrived with the petrol. A fierce storm had been raging round us all the latter part of the afternoon, but we missed

MUD

the worst of it, and we hoped to be able to get off again the next day.

So the journey rolled, or rather staggered, on!

We at length came to a region where millions of 'stink' beetles flourished, reinforced by the usual hordes of mosquitoes and gnats. If we chanced to go to sleep waiting for dinner we would always let a few mosquitoes into our nets while we climbed in and out of bed.

Sometimes we would be stuck for hours outside a village, and the Arab children, attracted by the unusual sight of a car, would dance round in high glee. They would stare at me, and turn away shyly if I spoke to them. The grown women and men, too, were rather like children, and would stand holding each other's hands or with their arms round each other's waists and shoulders. Some of the women wore great squares of amber strung round their necks. They were Homr Arabs.

I remember one little girl who attracted me very much—she was such a lovable-looking little thing. I threw her five piastres while she ran in front of the car. When we stuck—our inevitable fate—I wondered what had become of her. Later on she approached, very shyly, with a gift of three eggs in a tin, which I acknowledged with a present of four large safety-pins and an empty eau-de-Cologne bottle, which seemed to please her vastly. The car, on that occasion, had sunk up to the axles in mud, so we were condemned to yet another halt.

Muglad was still a long way off, and as the *askari* was going in on horseback, Errol decided to go with

SUDAN SAND

him to procure some more film. Darkness was beginning to fall, and the boys were making camp as quickly as they could, because it looked like raining again. Again!

Our only comfort was the knowledge that the *hamla* with our loads had arrived in Muglad some days previously, and therefore we should not have to wait there.

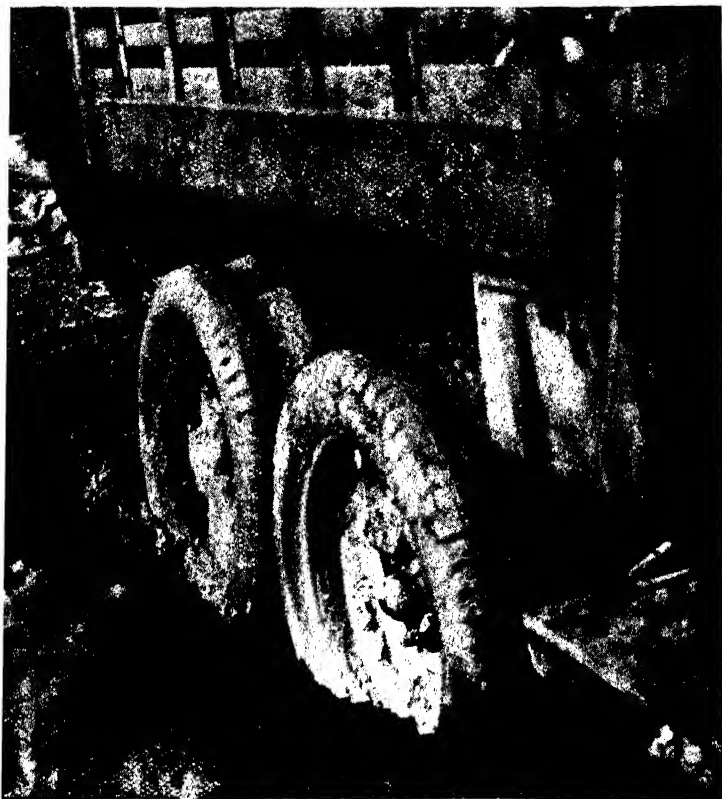
Some vicious little blackbirds at that spot tried very hard to peck Kima. Achmed informed me that they were natural enemies of monkeys—I suppose because monkeys rob their nests. They made a great fuss and noise, diving down in vain efforts to get at Kima, who was sitting close to my side. I had to rescue him from the tree in which, with great commotion, three of these queer blackbirds were pecking the poor little creature without mercy.

Chafing under the enforced delays and wondering if we should ever get through, I was naturally in no happier frame of mind when Achmed came specially to tell me the cheerful tidings that Mohammed had definitely prophesied rain again that night. This old Mohammed, it seemed, was something of a magician. When he held a page of the Koran loosely in his hand the Wind of the Prophet would come and blow it in the direction from which the rain must be expected. If it did not stir there would be no rain! It always stirred!

Errol, however, and Hassan, the police-boy, returned early next morning, after riding all night. They had obtained the things they had gone for,



A CRASH IN A SAND-SOAK



STUCK IN THE MUD

MUD

and had come straight back, bringing with them two Arab sheikhs, who had lent them two horses to replace the tired ones on which they had set out. It was a good piece of work.

The car had only just been extricated from a quicksand bog into which she had sunk. It had been an awful struggle to get her out. It was one of the worst 'sticks' in the whole of our experience. Slowly we moved off, reaching Muglad at six o'clock in the evening, having by way of compensation taken some lovely cinematograph pictures on the way. There was a pretty 'shot' of some little Arab girls walking through a shallow stretch of water which was surrounded by trees through which the sun shone, making golden splashes between the shadows on the water. I had grouped two little girls with their arms round each other's shoulders looking down at a very little one who had her arms round their waists and was looking up into their faces. Their expressions were exquisite.

There was mail waiting for us at Muglad, and we had intense joy reading everybody's news. Then we had to set to work, for there were letters—so many of them—to be written before we could start on our trek to Kubbe at 2 P.M., and our personnel also called for some reorganization. Two of our boys were down with fever, and one called Juma had to go back to civilized parts to join his old master. So we were rather short-handed. But eager to get on to Kubbe—the country where we were going to find the settings and the actors for the filming of our story—we pressed on. The

SUDAN SAND

details of that journey were recorded in my diary thus:

“ *Monday, June 11.*—We have not got very far because an amazing storm overtook us. Fortunately we just had time to get the bivvy up and the kit covered when down came the rain. It simply drenched everything. It came right through our mackintoshes, and in a few minutes the country looked like a vast lake. We were ankle-deep in water. The thunder was deafening, each crash coming almost simultaneously, with terrible streaks of lightning. I think every one of us felt a bit jumpy.

“ We have made a grand total of two miles to-day. The ground is so sodden that it is no use hoping for anything else while that kind of rain comes. We might miss a storm to-night, in which case we shall be able to get on to-morrow, because the ground is rather sandy soil just here, and will drain.

“ *Tuesday, June 12.*—Kima and Achmed are our casualties just now.

“ Kima’s face is swollen up like a football ; he has an abscess in his top jaw, caused through a broken decayed tooth, and it worries me to know how to extract it.

“ Achmed has a bruised leg. Somebody has given it an awful bang with a tent-peg mallet in mistake for a tent peg which was being knocked in during the storm.

“ I am more than ever convinced that car-transport is at present almost too difficult out

MUD

here, especially during the rains. If we don't have punctures we run out of petrol, and if we don't run out of petrol we get stuck for hours in sand or mud. The car was a success in certain parts, like the El Obeid to Muglad bit, before the rains had made the road soggy. The bush is so thick, too, on these straggly native paths that we can only battle through very slowly, getting hit in the eyes by branches, and we have to stop so frequently to cut or remove fallen trees.

"The country is all very much alike, with its sandy bits and muddy bits. It is thickly wooded, mostly with mimosa and a large bushy broad-leaved tree, the name of which I do not know. But there is a variety of trees, and they are all lovely. The young grass is up, and the whole country flaunts the greenest of carpets.

"We have the usual crowd of Arabs standing about staring with curiosity at us. They seem to be very contented — happy even — and extremely affectionate, for the men, as well as the women, stand with their arms round each other's shoulders and waists. We often see two girls, sometimes married women, sharing one wide length of silk or cotton cloth, which they hold over their heads and leave hanging over their shoulders down to their knees.

"The very little girls wear a kind of girdle of cloth, the ends of which fall down in front and behind. It is attached to their waists by another girdle of beads, amber beads if the girls are well favoured, and have received presents.

SUDAN SAND

“ The men wear long robes, but these garments are usually filthy rags. They begin by being lovely and white, but gradually become the colour of the dark cotton soil. I do not think that they are ever washed. It is disconcerting to see a perfect specimen of a man in one of these filthy robes. The sheikhs are spotless as a rule, but even they, the lesser ones, I mean, look pretty grimy as their garments get old.

“ They appear to be such idyllic people, but the romance fades after a short acquaintance.

“ The women have a queer custom of squatting over the smouldering fire of the bark of a thorn-tree and letting the smoke scent them thoroughly. It is the most nauseating and disgusting aroma I’ve ever smelt. It suggests darkness and evil to me. I always get cross when they come near me stinking of the stuff. It annoys me psychologically somehow.

“ They plait their hair in dozens of plaits, that hang down to their shoulders if they are lucky, for long hair is supposed to make them very lovely and desirable in the eyes of their menfolk. Some of these girls are really beautiful, but it is astonishing how much they vary. Some are negroid, and there are some among them that even look Mongolian. Others, of course, are pure Arab.

“ *Wednesday, June 13.*—I feel that I must again remark that our mileage was not great yesterday. We did one mile in all. At this rate it will take us a year and five days to reach Kubbe! The country is just a succession of quicksand pits. They

MUD

look perfectly normal on the top, but as soon as the car gets on to them, down she sinks to the axles.

“This time I believe the car is smashed. We drove into a bad hole, and she simply tipped over on to her side, cutting through the crust and down in the mud as if it were butter. The boys sitting on the back of the car were hurled about twenty feet into the air and landed in a pool of shallow water on the side. We were all pitched on to each other, but we were unhurt. One of the boys got a strained ankle, Achmed, to be precise, and he already had a bad leg.

“To-day there is much digging, and we do not yet know if there is much damage done, or none at all.

“I have noticed all through Africa that when a native is ill he always covers himself right up, head and all, with a blanket, if he has one. His head is simply buried beneath its folds, and I am astonished that he can breathe at all. It does not matter how hot the day is, he will always do this.

“Kima’s poor old jaw is less swollen to-day.

“I haven’t a thing to read. Sad! Sad!

“The mosquitoes are active here—they bite even in the daytime. We got some rain during the night, but not the heavy storm we expected. When the wind blows during rain we get saturated. Our beds are not very well protected because we have a bivvy only—no tent when travelling.

“*Later.*—We have got the car out—we hoisted her right out bodily with the aid of block and

SUDAN SAND

tackle and a tall tree. We are getting the kit back and shall be on the road in an hour or so, and then—ho, for the next stick!

“*Thursday, June 14.*—The car is stuck—for a change—in a sand-soak! Ha! Ha!

“ We got out of the worst of the muddy country and on to sandy soil yesterday. We camped late. To-day has been a rough day, plugging through heavy sand all day long in bottom gear. The engine, of course, gets like a furnace with this work, and sends the temperature up in the car. It is like sitting in front of a hot gas-fire on a sweltering day. The temperature varies between 90° and 120° in the car.

“ We got rain at four o'clock, and tried to drive on, but our jets or something have got water in them. C.T. and Errol had to keep on getting out to clean the carburettor. One of the boys must have poured some very foul petrol into the tank at some time, for not only is there water, but pieces of odd things like paint are found in the carburettor and filter.

“ We are camped on a nasty boggy place with lots of wet grass, and no trees near enough on which to fasten the bivvy. The beds are being made in the open, and it will be like going to bed in a swamp, as we have no top covering. I hope to goodness it doesn't rain; the heavy dew we get these nights is enough.

“ We seem to be having a taste of the Rhodesian days again. Mud, rain, and more mud. It's becoming a vice with us. C.T. has got fever, poor man,

has gone to bed, and is lying doggo under his blankets.

"We all have bites from various creatures all over us—the midges irritate the worst, I think—they even beat mosquitoes.

"And I do not care for the idea of hyenas or lions snooping round my bed to-night. I feel unhappy in this place somehow. It is strange how places, even out here in the wild, have differing atmospheres—one either likes or one feels a kind of creepy feeling about a camp.

"You'll gather by the above that I'm not exactly in one of my happiest and above-par moments!

"*Friday, June 15.*—Lovely morning—the dew is glistening on the grass and everybody is working on the car, trying to get it out of the sand-soak.

"Not much rain during the night, and C.T. is better.

"I hope we shall make Abu Gabra to-day.

"It is now 7.30. The sun rose at about 6.30.

"*Saturday, June 16.*—We did not get away until 1.30 P.M. yesterday. Of course it is slightly difficult taking a car through this country during the rains. But what can be done about it?

"All afternoon we ploughed along in bottom gear through heavy sodden sand. The grinding of that bottom gear after a while gets into the very heart of your nerves. Then we lost the path—some cattle tracks led us astray—and we got into a Rizeigat village, and the whole of the inhabitants turned out and ran beside the car screaming and shouting with excitement. The noise beating on raw and

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aching nerves was enough to make anybody bite their fingers off. The screaming of the excited Arabs and the grinding of the gear! By the time we camped I was really all in, and the others were a bit rattled too, I think. Kima went dotty and flew at everybody.

"We had to plough through the Rizeigat fields, as the path petered out a mile from the village, when the idiots led us through a 'short cut,' as they called it. Imagine the effect of a heavy car struggling in bottom gear through soft, sandy, even spongy, earth.

"This morning the car is being greased and a tyre mended. We hope to reach Abu Gabra and get on to a path to Kubbe to-day. How the lorry stands it is amazing.

"It is exactly three months to a day since we left England.

"*Sunday, June 17.*—We passed through Abu Gabra yesterday afternoon, and found that the *hamla* had already arrived, two days earlier, in fact, with our loads, and they are going on to Kubbe on a relay of bulls, while the others go back to Muglad.

"The ground is not so wet here. In fact, it looks as if there hasn't been much rain this way yet. It gave me a little shock to see Abu Gabra again after three years. When I passed through it before on the Cape-to-Cairo journey little did I dream that I should ever see it again.

"*Evening.*—We have done about seventy miles to-day. Handsome, isn't it? Simply incredible!

MUD

We batted along like anything—grand going—passed Abu Matarik at about 11.30 this morning—and I think that we are only about 25 miles off Buram.

“ We ran out of gear-box oil and are now running on a mixture of gear-box grease and sesame oil ! the only available grease at Abu Matarik—there was none at all at Abu Gabra yesterday.

“ I think that the Rizeigat, so far, are not very attractive-looking people, and that the Homr crowd are infinitely better-looking, but this is rather soon to judge, of course.

“ Bishari, at Abu Matarik, is a brother of Ibrahim Musa, the paramount chief of the Rizeigat, whose headquarters is Abu Gabra. Both are fine-looking men ; I suppose they had the same mother.

“ I notice many different types of people on the road. Some of them look like Haussa—or Fellata, to be more general—from French territory to the west, and even farther north from Bornu and around Chad.

“ We had a heavy deluge while travelling this afternoon, but it didn't stop us for long—we were on sand, and it rather improved the path.

“ There is a lizard warming himself at our fire (our second camp fire since we started the trip). He is quaint—he warms first one side and then the other—the off side remaining a dark grey colour and the fire side a bright pink. He has a long tail, which seems to be in danger of bursting into flames so pink has it become.

“ Kima eats far too many grasshoppers and

SUDAN SAND

things which make him sick. He is a love and is as gentle as a lamb these days.

“*Buram, Monday, June 18.*—We reached Buram as the smoke from the village fires ascended in the late evening. The surrounding country seems excellent for our purpose, and we are sure that we shall be able to get all the ‘shots’ for the picture we have come to make down here. There are lots of dom palms among others—dome-like, leafy trees, and very picturesque. We seem to have every type of scenery we want, in fact. The next thing is to see what we can do in the matter of characters and locations for the picture. The people in the village itself are mostly a mixture of Fellata and Habbania Arab, who work for the Ghali Tag ed Din, the Nazir, the paramount chief of the Habbania, in exchange for pieces of land on which to plant their crops. The Nazir’s own people—the Habbania—who are *baggara*,¹ are all scattered round about Buram in small villages.

“The old Nazir himself is quite one of the dearest old men to look at that I’ve ever seen. He is fattish and tall and has a white beard. His robes are always spotlessly white, and he has a pleasing manner. He came down to meet us with his sheikhs and ‘counsellors’—and it was lovely to see him sending all those very exalted personages running about doing his bidding. The lesser ones, the common people, fetched wood for fires, and water, and many presents arrived in the shape of milk, eggs, and chickens, and as a special mark of courtesy the old

¹ Cattle-owning people.

Paramount stood and watched operations to see that 'his guests' were properly served and welcomed. A stranger staying in the camp of an Arab is treated as a guest for three days—after which time, if he is unwelcome, anything might happen to him.

"Of course, at our first meeting with the old Nazir we shook hands, and he touched his heart and murmured polite words in flowing language and gesture. Our Arabic was halting, though earnest.

"We carried on a conversation with him through Hassan, our head boy. We spoke about hunting and our present purpose of photography. He told us that he had had a letter from 'the High Places' (Government, Khartoum) saying that we were the absolute and utter cat's pyjamas, and that all our wishes were to be granted. So we immediately asked for some men who could be sent out to locate lions, and he is going to do all he possibly can.

"*Buram, Tuesday, June 19.*—We had a cool night. I say cool, that is, comparatively cool, and soon after sunrise more gifts appeared. It is embarrassing, but one cannot refuse to accept them from the Nazir, as one could, no doubt, quite politely, from a lesser man. Honey in a goatskin has come, two young sheep, and fruit from the dom palm—I almost expect an Abyssinian song-bird and a few peacocks to arrive next.

"It is amusing to watch the Nazir's *wakil*, who stands by his side and props him—morally, I mean. Everything the old Nazir says is repeated by the *wakil*, and with warm exclamations of approval and suitable gestures.

SUDAN SAND

" We are doing a little photography to-day. C.T. and Errol, of course, are the photographers, for I know nothing of cameras, but I stand by seeing and suggesting, and helping in the direction. It is very interesting work.

" The trees are full of butterfly caterpillars. Errol photographed one which was attacked by ants. Caterpillar life is a continuous tragedy.

" *Still at Buram, Wednesday, June 20.*—On our arrival yesterday we sent an Arab on horseback to Kubbe for petrol. We have a dump there. It arrived this morning, and we find that the stuff is paraffin! We are going to try to run on it, but fear the consequences to the engine.

" It is about half a day by car to Kubbe.

" *Kubbe, Thursday, June 21.*—The words 'half a day' leap at my eyes. We had an awful day getting here. We simply crept along on that paraffin—the engine was boiling hot all the time, and we finally camped, after getting stuck in a bog, at about six in the evening. We just had time to get the bivvy up when another storm descended upon us. I simply clung to C.T. or Errol, the lightning was so lurid and terrific. It struck all round us with awful bangs. The rain came down in its usual fury and drowned the earth. We learned from an Arab who had ridden out that we were about half an hour's walk from Kubbe.

" *Later.*—We arrived at Kubbe, simply crawling in at three miles an hour, with the engine red-hot and grinding in low gear.

" There are not many mosquitoes here, but we



THE FILM VILLAGE



FILMING

M U D

are certain almost from the start that we shall have to go back to Buram. This place does not look quite the right thing, and the natives are a mixed lot and excessively hideous.

“ We all feel that Buram is the place at which to make some parts of the picture. The country round there is ideal for our work.”

So much for travelling in Africa !

We left the Bahr on May 31. We arrived, as you see, at Kubbe three weeks later, and at home we think three hours in a comfortable train an appalling journey !

CHAPTER IV

AT KUBBE

TRAVELLING, however, was ended for a time, and we were anxious to get down to serious work.

We spent a long day going over the scenario of the picture, and I made some useful notes. We intended, on the morrow, to reconnoitre, to decide upon country suitable for the village scenes.

Some native women were sweeping the sand in the *hosh*.¹ Achmed informed me that "These wimmins one time drunks and are now in clinkit."

At Kubbe a gift of ivory was presented to me by the Moawin,² and I hardly knew whether I ought to accept it or not, until I saw that I should bitterly offend if I refused. It consisted of two beautiful strings of ivory beads; the biggest were the size of large spoons. In addition there were four lovely little table-napkin rings of ivory, an ivory slave-bangle, four ivory egg-cups, and a fascinating little native-worked table-cover.

The old Moawin made a graceful little speech, saying that he would like me to accept the "little gift" as a mark of his deep respect and admiration, etc., etc.

I believe they had never seen a white woman at Kubbe before.

¹ Courtyard.

² Native official.

AT KUBBE

We were up before dawn the next day and were galloping off on our ponies just after the sun had risen. But our luck was distinctly 'out.' Although there were many places where we might have taken odd 'shots,' we should never have been able to make the body of the story with any material there. It was not thickly wooded enough, and the people were Fellata—uglier than the ugliest negro—so there was nothing for it but to wend our weary way back to Buram, where pictorial conditions would be better, although health conditions would be worse. The ground was low-lying at Buram, ominously lower than Kubbe, to which we appeared to climb all the way. Buram is probably lower than Muglad too, for I noticed a gradient for a great part of the way from there.

Here at Kubbe the ponies afforded us some amusement. I do not think they had been ridden much; they were too wild. At first they simply flew in and out of the bush and would not be guided at all. C.T. got his hands scratched with thorns. Yes, they were lovely devils of ponies and utter darlings! Kima was furious with us for having anything to do with them. He hated all horses and cows, and jabbered and pulled the most hideous faces at them when we departed on their backs. A strange and inexplicable monkey complex.

In acknowledgment of his hospitality we gave the old Moawin a 'tea-party.' This was a complete success, although the whole of the camp was disorganized for hours while the cook-boy made cakes and the others arranged a tarpaulin on the sand.

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Round our little table they placed the chairs, reinforced with two others which we had found. The old Moawin appeared in the most wonderful robes, and it was quite a jolly affair. He told us something about the desert campaigns in which he had fought during the War. He knew Colonel Lawrence, and had been with Colonel Newcombe. The old man told us about lovely train dynamitings (Lawrence's well-known game) and of his adventures in the Gallipoli campaign.

He had never visited Europe, and was not anxious to do so.

We rested a couple of days in Kubbe waiting for our petrol to arrive from Nyala, which was a few days' journey away to the north-west, and I spent some time writing more into the scenario.

My diary says:

" *Monday, June 25.*—We had a great storm about eight o'clock last night. Our beds were outside, so that when the wind suddenly sprang up we had no time to save our mosquito-nets from being battered down, but we did manage to save the beds from submersion—they, of course, had to be remade, and the blankets shaken fairly dry. It seemed as if we had all of the sand of the Sahara in them!

" The storm lasted a long time; the rain was heavy, and was accompanied, of course, by the usual thunder and lightning.

" I have spent the greater part of the morning cutting and shampooing my men's hair. It needed it.

" I am rather fit to-day. It is so jolly.

" *Tuesday, June 26.*—There was a commotion





FILLING WATERSKINS BEFORE A DESERT MARCH

here last night when two lions made a terrific din. The natives shouted, and the kind of chant they use for spreading the news from group to group of huts was quite exciting to listen to.

"It appears that these lions are after some camels, and we shall probably hear them again to-night. They infest the country all round here, we hear, and are always taking the people's cattle or camels.

"I have been busy again to-day writing some more scenes into the scenario. The story is so real to me that I am constantly seeing new pictures for it.

"C.T. told the story to Hassan, who will have to translate it to the 'actors' when we get them. The old thing was awfully intelligent and quite grasped the idea.

"If the petrol does not come to-night we shall go down to Buram by bulls and leave the car here.

"C.T. and Errol photographed a huge lizard for the 'Forest of Ghosts' in the film. It was a weird-looking beast on a dead tree-trunk, and will look more weird when it is seen on the screen, as they photographed it at various effective angles.

"It is slightly cooler to-day, thanks be!

"*Wednesday, June 27.*—Lions again last night. They came at twelve o'clock. There was the same commotion as the night before.

"There is simply nothing exciting otherwise. We are waiting for petrol.

"The old Moawin came for a pow-wow this evening.

"A Fellata man also came with a parrot for sale.

SUDAN SAND

He is a trader who has walked down from French territory. He knows the Bahr Aouck and Ubangi Shari, and was astonished that we knew all about them too. C.T. had a long conversation with him through Hassan. Of course, we are very near the French territory down here—about 250 miles—and that is why we have all these hideous Fellata people here in villages scattered all over the place.

“ *Thursday, June 28.*—The bulls with our extra kit have arrived from Muglad, but there is no petrol and likewise there is no oil with the loads. So to-morrow we push off to Buram with the bulls, leaving the car here until the petrol arrives from Nyala. C.T. or Errol will come back here later for it.

“ Our wireless gear has not yet arrived—beastly nuisance.

“ We paid a visit to the Moawin’s headquarters—awfully well run. While we were there one of the *hamla* men came in with letters from the chief of the Rizeigat, who said that he had sent a wart-hog by the bull-transport for the *Sartel Sitt*¹—that’s me! He was followed by another *hamla* man, who said that it grieved him to have to report that on the journey here the wart-hog had broken his cord and run away! While proffering the ‘explanation’ the fellow’s face resembled a kind of surprised-looking saucer with two black holes in it for eyes.

“ The Moawin’s countenance also during the lengthy recital was a study, for it struggled between amusement and utter disbelief.

¹ Excellent Lady.

AT KUBBE

“ When the man had been dismissed with a few sharp words the old Moawin turned to me and said with a smile that it was more than possible that the wart-hog had never been sent at all; that no doubt it was simply a case of Sudanese politeness when one must take the will for the deed!

“ *Buram, Friday, June 29.*—We started off this morning at 10 A.M. We had worked from sunrise to get all our loads distributed on the bulls and camels. They made a most impressive sight when they all streaked off in a snaky curve—we three rode ponies, lovely little Arab ponies, and our servants were perched on mules. There must have been about sixty animals in all. We rode all day, did about thirty-six miles, and camped at 6.30 at Buram, where the old Nazir of the Habbania met us again complete with sheikhs. Here we commence another search for a ‘location’ for the picture, and suitable characters too. It’s a problem.

“ I cannot write more to-night. Thirty-six miles is a longish ride.”

CHAPTER V

PREPARING TO MAKE THE PICTURE

WELL, there we were at grips with the work we had set out to do—the making of a film.

It was a remote location about six hundred miles south-west from Khartoum—thirty-six miles away was Kubbe, a small Government post. The only white people who had ever stayed there were District Commissioners.

The surrounding country consisted of strips of forest and grass plains, sparsely populated by Habbania and Fellata as regards humans, and as regards game by hartebeest, gazelle in particular, also lions and leopards.

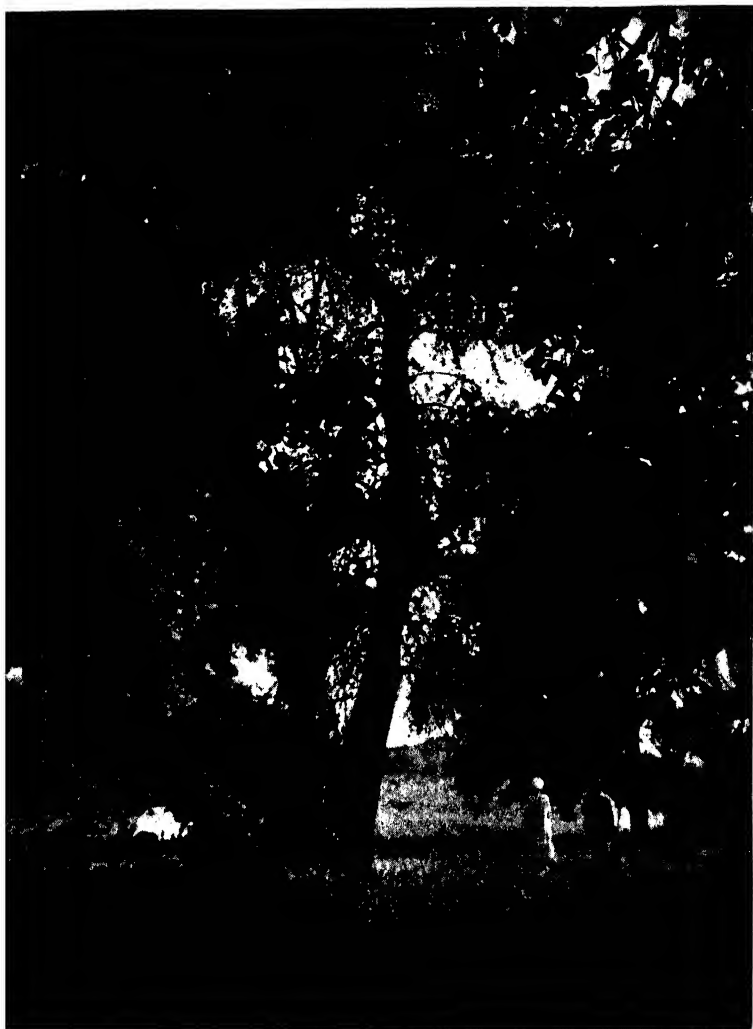
At night it was infested with hyenas.

How did we live there? I could write at length about my own personal reactions, about our hopes and fears, but it would lack the vividness of my diary, I think, which, jotted down from day to day, records big things and little things just as they happened.

Some of it may bore you—well, the actuality bored me. Some of it may suggest thrills. They are the thrills that thrilled me. Thus:

“*At Buram, Sunday, July 1.*—We have been hacking about most of the day looking for locations—we have two likely spots for the village, and of course there is more forest than we know what to do with. The real difficulty lies in finding suitable





FIXING A LOCATION FOR THE RIVER WE MADE FOR THE FILM

PREPARING FOR THE PICTURE

forest, with a natural watercourse in the same place. We shall probably end up by making a 'river,' trusting that when we get a good rain again it will fill up. This looks to me to be the only solution. In the afternoon the little 'dark room' was unpacked and erected. It is a work of art, that collapsible dark room. It is beautifully made: the walls, roof, and floor are of aluminium, double-sided, with wood sandwiched in between; it all bolts together, and even has windows and a door—a marvellous affair, completely light- and dust-proof. It was made to the designs of C.T. and Errol in London.

"We have our tent pitched on a piece of cleared ground, but it is dreadfully dusty. We hope for an improvement after a good rain, though. We are going to have a hut built with a hard mud floor. The curse of these wilderness homes is that they are never free from white ants, which are a perfect scourge, as they burrow through anything and everything, and drop off the grass roof on to our heads. I do not care for white ants much, do you? Then we have the usual legion of scorpions and spiders and things. Mosquitoes one begins to dismiss as—well, mere mosquitoes, after a while. Everything in life is a matter of comparison, as we all realize, but we realize it even more out here.

"Kima is having a lovely time in a big tree catching bugs and butterflies.

"*Monday, July 2.*—A hot wind is blowing this morning, and the birds are making all the noise they can—donkeys are braying, and some white goats are making weird cries like fretful children.

SUDAN SAND

I've never heard goats quite like these before. We are expecting batches of people, from whom we hope to select some suitable types for the picture, to come in from the neighbouring villages. Getting the right people is a more difficult task than one would think, especially as some of them have to match. For instance, we need a young girl and then the same girl grown up. Also two young boys, and the same boys grown up. Also a young and an old man, and a woman—all to match at both ages.

"There is a big snake living in the tree here. The boys are on the *qui vive* and hope to slay it when it comes down. Thank goodness it isn't in Kima's tree.

"We have so much to do. I hope we shall get our people within the next few days. Meanwhile C.T. and Errol are putting the finishing touches to the dark room to-day.

"Some white birds have just flown over the camp—perhaps it is a good omen!

"The dear little Arab ponies have gone back to Kubbe; it is sad. There are others here, but they are not so lovely.

"The drinking water is clear but full of minute fishy things, so we have to watch the boys to see that they boil it before putting it into the drinking-jar.

"*Tuesday, July 3.*—We have pegged out the place for the village and little river at a lovely spot not far from here. We searched the whole countryside for it, and then I found it almost at our tent door, about 200 yards off. It is true that we shall have to dig and make a river, but there is a little natural



A SCENE IN THE FILM OF ARABS SPEARING A WATER-PYTHON



YOUNG GAZELLE

PREPARING FOR THE PICTURE

watercourse there, so it will be possible to make it look real.

"We have interviewed about twenty people for the cast, but they are all quite hopeless. One man is a fascinating-looking creature, but I'm afraid that he is just a little old-looking for Boru, the hero. I'm sure he would simply thrill the hearts of a good many feminine 'movie fans.' We'll see.

"The dark room is an immense success, and the developing that has already been done is perfect.

"We are going to the Friday morning *suk*¹ to see whether there are any 'possibles' there for the picture.

"Two small gazelles were brought into camp yesterday, lovely little chaps, and we are enticing a mother-goat to adopt them. A baby hawk came in a basket, and two young pythons—I hear that the latter beat it back into the bush some time to-day.

"We are considered grand doctors, but our medicine outfit is of a moderate size, and our *dawa* cannot last long at this rate. Our latest patient is the Nazir. The old thing has a touch of wobbly heart, I'm afraid. I hope he doesn't get seriously ill.

"*Wednesday, July 4.*—It is a cool day—signs of rain, and a great relief after the intense heat. There are ten calves skipping about and lots of little goats too. Arab children are playing among them, and the world is merry. These grey days seem to ease and gladden every living thing.

"Our baby gazelle had a glorious feed from mother-goat this morning. The reluctant foster-

¹ Market.

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parent did not seem to resent it as much as she did yesterday. The baby is adorable, with the softest muzzle I've ever conceived it possible for any creature to have.

"Some Arabs are digging away at the 'little river,' but they do not like work and are slow.

"We have all our kit with us now except the wireless set, which will be sent down to us by camels from El Obeid, where the railway ends. We are anxious to test it to see if we can get satisfactory results.

"*Thursday, July 5.*—A message came to say that the petrol and oil had arrived, so Errol has taken Hassan, the *askari*, and Kasim to Kubbe to fetch the car. We are having an awful bother with the Arabs—they can't or won't work. They do a little, then sit down, or slope off altogether. Grass has not yet appeared for our hut, and we haven't yet found people for the picture.

"We have written a chit to our old Moawin at Kubbe about it, and Errol, too, will put the case before him. So we ought to get something done with the aid of a little gentle persuasion from a couple of his *askaris*.

"A lot of men have been at work on the 'river,' and it is beginning to look quite convincing, although, because of the laziness of the Arabs, it is still very shallow. We are just intensifying the natural watercourse. 'If the mountain won't come to Mahomet,' etc. So it is with regard to the river.

"Lots of wild duck and geese here. There are partridges too.

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“ Our baby gazelle is lovely and very greedy, and has just naturally been given the name of ‘Old Tuckin.’ The goat foster-mother still sniffs a bit at him, but is getting more reconciled to her strange lot. The baby calves are chasing each other and prancing about again, and making lovely noises.

“ *Friday, July 6.*—A sergeant of *askari* arrived from Kubbe last evening—and you ought to see the difference in the Arabs to-day. He threatens them when they slack, and has made them do their fair share of work for a change.

“ We go to the *suk* to-day. It is market day, when all the people come in from the neighbouring villages with their grain and other commodities.

“ They sell the bark of the thorn-tree, which, when burned in a smouldering fire, produces the smoke over which the Arab ladies crouch, thus ‘perfuming’ themselves. I think the ‘perfume’ is an atrocious stink—but who can say whose conception of sweet smells is right—theirs or mine? We think that the African—the negro, that is—has a peculiarly offensive odour, but he, on the other hand, says that we smell of death. Exactly what that means I am not sure.

“ I hope Errol won’t forget to bring Adolph, the game little cockerel, back with him. We miss his cheery crow. He even crows at night—bless him! Old Tuckin is having his breakfast, and is apparently loving it, because I can hear ecstatic little gurgles—Kima is his usual bright self, the scoundrel. His latest wheeze is to run up and swing on one of the tent-ropes.

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“ *Saturday, July 7.*—Errol came back with the car yesterday, having found the going much better than when we went to Kubbe. He did bring Adolph back, who, immediately on arrival, loosed off a magnificent crow.

“ We didn’t see a single soul at the *suk* who would even remotely serve our purpose. Meanwhile work goes on, and our river is going strong. We now have some, Kubbe *askaris*, sent down by the good Moawin, who are making the Arabs work for their extremely good wages. We also have some new Fellata boys who are marvels, and work like anything. They are versatile people, proficient in the arts of tanning, leather-work, skinning, basket-work, and a good many other things, but are, I feel sure, complete rogues.

“ Five Arabs brought in a magnificent lion-skin last evening, having speared the beast a few miles away from here in the earlier part of the day. They heard one of their horses scream, and then the roar of a lion, so they sprang on to their horses, and proceeded to hunt the lion, which they soon found and dispatched with a few well-directed spear-thrusts. They said that the beast fought a bit, ‘but not for long.’ They are pretty cool people, if lazy.

“ Our Fellata are preparing the skin. The skull was a beauty, with great teeth, and the boys carefully placed it just outside the door of their hut; but during the night it was, of course, taken by a hyena. Too maddening! We heard the beast howling about the camp, but did not know that he was after the lion skull. C.T. got up during the



MAKING THE LITTLE RIVER FOR THE FILM



SPOTS

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night and went out with his gun to take a pot-shot at the creature, because we were afraid that he was sneaking about after Old Tuckin and the other two little gazelles we now have. C.T. couldn't see a sign of him, but of course, as soon as we settled down again, the old hyena made the night hideous with more howls.

"We keep adding inmates to our menagerie. We now have two baby cheetahs. They are lovely little mites, and although their eyes are only just open, they are as wild as they can be. Kima is thrilled to the marrow by them, and insists upon nursing them, just as he does his rubber Bonzo. The cheetahs spit and claw him, but he doesn't care. I believe they will get tame after a while, and play with him.

"There is great activity in the camp, and we are getting a move on. Things will go with a bang when we secure our chief characters.

"*Sunday, July 8.*—The peace and colour of a perfect African evening are stealing over everything at this hour. The forest trees show glimpses of sky through their big leaves, and the birds are chattering over the last few beakfuls before going to sleep. Arabs are wandering homeward, and children shrill and call to each other. The palm-trees stand out, clear against a pink-and-gold-streaked sky, and—Adolph is crowing again!

"It has been a full day of work—our river is looking just like the real thing now, and we have some more pets. A two-months-old ant-bear came to-day, and he insists upon making enormous

excavations anywhere everywhere. A most engaging animal! He is queer, to say the least. His looks are entirely prehistoric. His tail is rather like that of a kangaroo, and his snout is twice as long as a pig's. His forelegs are shorter than his hind ones, which are thick and massive and end with enormous feet, rather like a baboon's, with great strong nails for scratching up the earth. His body, at this stage of his growth, is entirely hairless, and he is extremely friendly, almost sentimental! We love him.

"Our baby cheetahs cuddle up to me like kittens, but they are hard to feed, because they can't lap yet.

"The dark room is having a grass roof built right over it, and there has been great activity to-day under the giant wild fig-tree, beneath which it stands.

"Errol has been making *biltong*,¹ and C.T. distilling water for the spare batteries, which we hope to use when the wireless apparatus arrives.

"The sky is aflame now, and the frogs and crickets have begun their concert.

"Old Tuckin thrives, but the other baby gazelle died last night. We got two cheetah-skins from an Arab to-day. One of them had just been taken, it was still wet, and—incidentally, the cheetah had only this very morning killed the man's cow. We are setting traps for hyena. They are becoming a nuisance round camp.

"*Monday, July 9.*—I think I am going to have earache.

"*Tuesday, July 10.*—Too true. I have!

¹ Dried meat.



MY BABY GIRAFFE



MY BABY LEOPARD

PREPARING FOR THE PICTURE

“Two little marmosets arrived to-day. They are tiny things, only as big as my fist, with huge brown eyes. I’ve called the babier of the two ‘Lamps.’ They have long fluffy tails that curl up in several coils. The cheetahs are growing visibly, and are at last learning to drink by themselves.

“The ‘river’ excavations are finished, and look simply grand.

“The boys are now making us a hut to live in.

“*Wednesday, July 11.*—Earache and more earache. I’m thinking of taking myself out into the nearest field with a shot-gun. Only it is *all* field, so it might not be so dramatic after all. It’s a futile ailment to cause such a turmoil in your life. I swear it’s worse than toothache, if that is possible.

“We are awfully ‘amused at the ant-bear. He is such an affectionate creature and follows me about.

“*Thursday, July 12.*—Two little leopards were brought in this morning. We can’t resist these lovely creatures and must buy them. They snarl and growl and make real leopard faces already, the darlings!

“We have a porcupine, too. It takes a lot of time feeding all our pets these days. Kima remains first favourite always. One of the marmosets died yesterday.

“The Fellata boy who took the cheetah-skins to be tanned brought them back this morning beautifully done. The lion-skin isn’t finished yet.

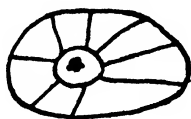
“Achmed lapsed badly last night, and the consequence is that this morning he can do no work. Wine and women are, even in the wilderness, a

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menace! We forgive him this once. It is the first time. He is an awfully efficient boy, really.

"We are praying for rain—this might sound funny—but we haven't had any for days, and the herbage we had planted on the banks of the 'river' needs water, so, incidentally, does the 'river.'

"Hassan hasn't caught anything in his trap yet. It is an amazing trap, too—it's like this:



The rose in the middle is the bait on the central spit of earth.

"The scratchy lines are the branches hiding the pit.

"The outside ring is a bank—the space between it and the inside ring is a deep circular pit, and in the middle is a conical tower of earth on to which the bait is placed. Then the pit is hidden by branches. The hyena—or some other animal—comes along, sees the meat, dashes for it, and falls into the covered circular pit. See the idea?

"The hut is nearly finished, and the next item on the programme will be the making of a village on the site we have found. I hope that we shall be able to find the right people for the story. It's going to be difficult. We have everything but the people up to the moment.

"*Friday, July 13.*—We have had a busy day. Errol and I went to the *suk* to look at 'possibles,' and I

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think we have found the people who will do for Boru and Nikitu, the principal male characters. One man is a perfect type for the part. The trouble is that we must find young boys of about twelve or fourteen to match them exactly. I selected thirty people of both sexes and of all ages—that is, all ages required for the picture. The women are *hopeless*. They are usually so beautiful when they are children, but when they reach the marriageable age of twelve or fourteen they all tattoo their lips, which, of course, coarsens and blackens them. We think we have found one ‘possible’—but the whole group was photographed, and we shall see the printed results to-morrow.

“The three men are coming in the morning, and we are going to make elaborate tests of them.

“Errol and C.T. photographed a bit for the fire sequence.

“At the moment we have two leopards—they will be pretty fierce before much longer and then heaven help the chickens!—two cheetahs, four gazelles, two ant-bears, a mother-goat, a monkey (besides Kima), a polecat, a night ape, two hawks, four ibises, two porcupines, a tortoise, a rabbit, four liggavans (large lizards), and two more civet kittens which are being wet-nursed!

“Last night we heard a great squawking and thought that Adolph was up to his games again and fighting the other rooster, but not so—a wild cat was taking two of our chickens. We have hyenas round our camp every night, except—of course—the nights when traps are set!

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“ The rain holds off. It tried hard to-day, but did not cause anything like a flood. We compare this time, when the rains should be drowning us, with the days about a month ago, when we were wallowing along in the car, spending most of our time digging it out of rain-sodden bog. Such is life!

“ We’ve had all sorts of difficulties with our developing water ; the well in the village has caved in, and we are wondering whether to make another, as the rain seems so reluctant. Still, C.T. and Errol have done some good and useful work in the developing line.

“ *Saturday, July 14.*—The two Arab men I found in the *suk* are definitely engaged to play the parts of Boru and Nikitu.

“ Errol took ‘still’ photographs of them, and they look as if they’ll do admirably. It is true that we had to pay 300 piastres to each for their beards, which must be shaved off before they will suit the parts! and 80 piastres in advance of salary (a month’s wages, that is). But one chap is a Valentino—and I believe they will act—that is, act naturally.

“ We have everything for a fine picture now except the women. We cannot find any round here. Errol is going off to-morrow to search for some.

“ I do not find that time drags just now. I have to be on the spot when pictures are taken, watching detail, and helping in the direction and sometimes being photographed myself. There are the animals, too, which need attention, although we have a boy now to feed them regularly.



ARABS BUILDING A SHELTER



THE HERO AND HEROINE OF "STAMPEDE"

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“ The dark room’s grass roof has been completed, and our hut is almost finished too. The camp is beginning to look most businesslike, but we are not getting enough rain to fill the artificial river. It is irritating, not to say alarming. Just want one thing, and you’re sure to get another. Heigh-ho!

“ Earache comes back in spasms.

“ *Sunday, July 15.*—Errol left with *askari* Hassan and one of the Nazir’s men early this morning to go in search of my Loweno and other women to play parts in the drama. They departed on scraggy Arab nags with a pack-mule in tow, carrying Errol’s bed-roll and food and the Arab’s stuff as well. Errol is going to the various villages and will comb them thoroughly. These Habbania are not beautiful, because they are so mixed with negro and Fellata blood. I don’t mean to say that the Fellata as a race are hideous, but the people at Kubbe and down here certainly are. Some of them are distinctly un-Arab in appearance.

“ We did a bit of ‘ burning forest ’ photography to-day and are putting out the flash-light apparatus to-night, in the hope of getting some photos of the hyenas that come howling round after dark.

“ The hyenas are becoming an absolute menace. They seem to think that all they have to do to get food is to walk into the camp and take what they want!

“ *Tuesday, July 17.*—C.T. has fixed up a trap-gun, and we hope to bag a hyena to-night. It’s a wily gadget, and if the old hyena tries to take the meat his head will be blown off.

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"We have a young baboon now. He is only about a month old, and the little thing is awfully quaint. Kima has adopted him. I loathe baboons, but this creature is rather sweet and somewhat like a human baby. He cries like one when Kima refuses to nurse him. We shall, of course, let him go when he gets about four or six months old.

"Errol sent in a lot of people to-day whom we've photographed for tests. Lord, how hard it is to get just the right ones!

"The Arabs here affirm that the hyenas are Messalat Arabs who can turn themselves into hyenas at will. Isn't that odd were-wolf superstition rife in Africa? Every native tribe believes in something of the kind.

"The old Nazir told C.T. quite gravely that if the rain held off any longer he would lose his crops and suffer greatly; so at great expense, having to pay in advance, he, the Nazir, has engaged the services of professional rain-makers.

"These rain-makers, it appears, choose certain prayers from the Koran, which they write on pieces of paper, and then soak in water. After all the ink has been absorbed into the water the bowl is held up to the sky, during which procedure they incantate, after which the water is sprinkled on to the ground, and, hey presto—rain! or so they say. I'll bet they choose a day when it is pretty certain to rain anyhow.

"The builders are making a store hut now. Soon the work will be completed and our camp more habitable. I'm still very anxious about the

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characters for the picture. Kima runs loose in the trees now, and considers this *the* life—we have added two little red monkeys to our collection of pets.

“The leopards simply gorge meat, and the baby cheetahs are learning to eat it too. We let the polecat go.

“It would seem that we are in for a bit of a celebration on the 24th, because it is Errol’s birthday, and the District Commissioner from Nyala is also coming down to see what Buram would be like as an out-station, as the authorities are afraid that it is not healthy enough.

“It will be nice to see another white face again. The Government station is at Nyala, a long trek from here.

“The heat has been incredible. I should not have survived if we’d got this on our arrival in the Sudan, and it was bad enough then, but it is now speckling with rain. I suppose the rain-makers are getting busy.

“*Wednesday, July 18.*—Errol came back this afternoon and says that he had a difficult time trying to get the right people. They are reluctant to come, but will do so because the Nazir orders it. In any case they all seem to be the wrong type. It is hard to find little boys to match the older ones, and the same applies to the girls. Errol has done awfully well considering the scarcity of material, and among the ‘possibles’ he sent in are one or two who might do.

“He is extremely amused by young Egbert, the baby baboon, who came while he was away. He is a strange little creature, and he pulls such hideous

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faces. He has a nose exactly like a very ancient and shrivelled carrot, the kind you find in the bottom of the vegetable basket.

“ Why doesn’t it really rain? We must have some soon, or the herbage we planted on the banks of our river will suffer. The Nazir is awfully perturbed. He says that his people have planted their seed, and nothing has come up, and he is afraid that it has rotted in the ground. They have many superstitious ‘explanations.’ I hope these superstitions will not extend to us, and cause them to think that it is our fault that the rain has stopped! Certainly the drought began as soon as we came here.

“ C.T.’s trap-gun did not shoot a hyena. Hyena spoor was found all round the thorn-enclosed *boma* in which the animals sleep, but the marauders were too clever to get shot. Who knows, there may be something in the Messalat story after all!

“ *Thursday, July 19.*—No rain yet. It is serious. Things are beginning to dry up. I dare not think what will happen to our river if we do not get some soon.

“ We have been photographing women to-day. We ought to get some results. I am more convinced than ever that the Nazir’s little son will do for Nikitu. I got C.T. to photograph him to-day.

“ To-morrow is *suk* day, and we shall try again. The heat is beyond belief.

“ Three little wild ducks have just been brought in, swimming in a calabash of water. They look like toy ones and are ravishing.

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“*Friday, July 20.*—We photographed a tremendous python to-day for the first scene of the picture. He was a perfect snake. We got a ‘shot’ of him above in the tree with his head coming down toward the baby under the same tree, and the mother dashing into the picture and snatching the child out of harm’s way. There was not one atom of ‘fake.’ It was all genuine, and we intend everything in the picture from beginning to end to be real.

“You see the snake just above the head of the child, and the woman, all in the same picture. We are thrilled about it.

“After the picture was taken, the snake in the meantime having gone into another tree, I was photographed shooting it.

“The hunter Arab in the picture with me was the actual discoverer of the snake, which, I am pleased to say, didn’t get away.

“It is trying hard to rain. The old Nazir’s rain-makers are working overtime!

“*Saturday, July 21.*—Errol did a bit of doctoring by pouring warm oil into my agonized ear—but *nothing* does any good when it is at its worst.

“We shall be moving out of the tent into the hut to-morrow—the white ants are busy already; I suppose we shall have the whole place full of them soon.

“The trap-gun got a hyena the night before last, but the beast was only wounded. He made the most weird and awful noises when he was shot and *ran screaming up to the village*—see? Of course

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it was either a Messalat or a Fellata living in the village! I mean to say, the thing is obvious. It could be no ordinary hyena to run up into the village, of all places! No, no. The Arabs say so!

"We had a fairly good rain last night, which makes us hope that we shall get enough soon to fill the little river.

"The baby leopards are exceedingly plump and tractable, and they are so sweet that one wishes that they would never grow up. We haven't done any photography to-day. We shan't be able to get down to real production until we get our Loweno and other characters.

"There is a lovely light in the sky just now. It is a quarter to six. The air is cooler, and the light is a sort of mixture of gold and crystal and jade green. The sky is pale blue, with woolly clouds scudding about.

"The camp is dreaming—there are sounds of calves mooing in answer to their mothers' calls, and the birds are very busy having their evening meal of figs in the branches above my 'study' where I am writing. The days slip by.

"*Monday, July 23.*—Hard day to-day. Everything went wrong in camp somehow. The boys all seemed to be drugged—they were so stupid. We got our things out of the tent into the hut, which is much cooler.

"*Tuesday, July 24.*—It is Errol's birthday.

"We had a jolly little dinner out under the stars and drank a bottle of champagne. It is true that it was taken out of our medical comforts box, but

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what would you? Then we played the gramophone, and talked a great deal. A runner came from Nyala with some mail for us, which we read sitting on my bed by the light of a lantern.

"*Wednesday, July 25.*—Mr M., the D.C. from Nyala, has come and is 'holding court.' He has masses of plaintiffs round the door of his tent, and will be here some days handing out justice and punishment to the Habbania.

"*Saturday, July 28.*—A young ground hornbill has been added to the collection. He is a queer creature with round blue-grey eyes.

"Kima's naughty. He ate a tube of vaseline.

"We had rain last night, and a crack of lightning that got into my fingers and made them ache. It didn't strike the hut, but the ground very close by got it.

"We had a large tea-fight for the Nazir and his Omdas. They all sat round drinking tea with loud sucking noises.

"Everybody laughed a lot, and C.T. told them that it is better to fall out of a motor-car than an aeroplane because you haven't so far to fall!—*much* laughter.

"In spite of last night's storm, the rain question is *serious*. Everything is drying up. It is so maddening when we remember all the rain we got going to, and coming from, the Bahr-el-Arab.

"*Monday, July 30.*—I can't understand what has happened to our *hamla*. We are still waiting for our wireless set. People will be giving us up for lost if we don't get some news through to them soon.

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“ Errol and C.T. these nights sit up in a tree waiting to get some flash-light pictures of a leopard that sneaks around. The flash operates mechanically and could be left to itself, but they can control the pictures by pressing the bulb just at the right moment if they are there.

“ Kima has a little red monkey friend who simply hangs on every word he says. She’s awfully devoted, but Kima doesn’t permit too much affection, and shoos her off when she becomes a nuisance.

“ *Tuesday, July 31.*—No luck with the flash cameras last night, although C.T. and Errol took turns in watching all night. Things prowled round, but they would not touch the bait. We heard hyenas, jackals, and things all night. Perhaps they smelt the handling of the bait. By to-night it ought to be all right!—slightly ‘high’ and thoroughly tempting.

“ It is trying to rain again. A few spots have fallen on this page—hurray—it is about time it came.

“ Of course we can’t do a thing until that river fills, because we can’t take the ‘shots’ of the village, which will be beyond, until the river is full, and the view unobscured by huts.

“ One of the little leopards was found dead in the enclosure this morning. I told the animal boy to bring them out so that I could play with them, and he brought the poor darling out of the inner enclosure, holding his nose with one hand, to indicate that the little creature was quite dead.

“ We are getting terribly anxious about the rain. If it does not come this month we shall be *lost*!

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“ We have got all fixed up here—huts made. All our kit is down and everything just ready to start production, but there has been no rain to fill the river, which is so important. I daren’t turn back to see what I’ve written about rain in the earlier pages of this diary. Isn’t everything just *contrary*? The grass and trees are still green, though, even if the palms look dry.

“ This is supposed to be the best—or worst, depending upon your point of view—month for rain. So let’s hope. A Fellata belle is being sent down. People say that she is ‘ the thing ’ in native beauty. I hope so—we ought to find an attractive heroine to match the hero, who really is just the embodiment of the character I conceived when I wrote the scenario. It was great good luck finding the hero in the *suk* that day.

“ The little red monkey was missing for two days, but she has turned up again. I’m so glad, because she and Kima are such good friends. She makes a noise that sounds like ‘ Mow-mow, good morning,’ so that is her name.”

CHAPTER VI

THE ACCIDENT

I MUST leave to the imagination the feelings with which I wrote the entries which follow here.

“*August 3.*—God grant that C.T.’s eyes will be spared.

“C.T. and Hassan and the policeman were blinded and burnt yesterday morning at 10.30.

“Their agony is great, and mine in this awful hour of suspense is terrible. Errol is a tower of strength to me. I am writing as I sit by C.T.’s side. He is sleeping at last. I have sent an Arab to ride to Nyala for a doctor.

“*Saturday, August 4.*—C.T. may not be blind. Errol and I haven’t ceased to care and attend to them. I am nursing C.T., and Errol is nursing the natives. We hope that a doctor will come—the Arab will have ridden until he was exhausted, and another man and horse will have taken on and ridden, and so on until the message gets to Nyala. I expect if there is a doctor there he will be here in a few days, by which time I hope we shall no longer need him.

“C.T. and the two boys were connecting up the flash-light batteries for the cameras when something went wrong, and the flash powder held in C.T.’s hands exploded into their faces. I haven’t the strength to describe anything now.

THE ACCIDENT

" Their faces are masks of burnt flesh, their hands are the same—burnt, burnt—we put picric dressings on them at once, all we had. I added hazeline ointment where necessary. The eyes are bad beyond words—but to-day I see hope and good results. We are fighting desperately.

" The heat is unbelievable, which makes our job so hard. I pray that all will be well. The shock was almost too much. Old Hassan, the head boy, is very bad too, and we think he will be quite blind. Errol and I are doing everything we can think of. The pain has eased off to-day, and they can both sleep, which will save them. The other boy is all right. He was badly burnt, but nothing like C.T. and Hassan. C.T.'s eyes are easier, and the boracic-lotion pads and hazeline applications are going to save them both I know. Old Hassan is easier, but there is no sight yet either.

" Of course C.T.'s eyes are quite closed, but by prising open very gently I can swab them. I am sitting by his side—he is sleeping. I never leave him. I have just gently cleansed the slits between his lids with small cotton-wool swabs dipped in boracic lotion.

" I wonder if we are really doing the right thing?

" I disinfected the whole face by laying a wet pad of acriflavine on it—Errol did the same for Hassan too. Thank heaven we had six small bottles of champagne—C.T. has that and egg-nogs. Poor one—how he must have suffered before he got this sleep he is having to-day ! The picric burn-dressing

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did much to mitigate the pain of the burns he says. His poor lips are terribly burnt. His helmet got a lot of the blast of the explosion though.

"C.T.'s nerves stood the strain manfully. He only twice wandered a bit. He said, 'Stella, those damned Huns have started again.' Then again, 'Do you hear those bangs?'

"I know he will be all right now, though. He has gone through the worst. Most of the magnesium powder has worked out of his eyes, I think.

"Even tragedies have their humour—the sub-Mamur, a young Sudanese, arrived from Kubbe—he had ridden—good man—all afternoon and night—and said, 'I have received the information that the Major was out in the woods shooting the small birds and he have had his face blown by the exploded bullet.'

"Oh, I wish this dreadful time would pass from us quickly, and yet I am so thankful that things are no worse. Errol and I have had about two hours' sleep in all.

"*Sunday, August 5.*—Thank God C.T. will be able to see. He can distinguish between light and darkness. He is not too well this morning. I've got to fight like anything to keep his wounds from becoming septic. The chin and nose are the worst. Old Hassan is pretty bad, too. I fear gangrene.

"*Monday, August 6.*—The Syrian doctor arrived at noon to-day. He made a thorough examination, and says that we couldn't have done better for the patients. Thank goodness! He says that neither of them will lose their sight, and that C.T. will

THE ACCIDENT

probably not be scarred. He may not grow new eyelashes—that is all.

“ I am so tired.

“ *Tuesday, August 7.*—Errol and I feel such a relief that we have saved C.T. and Hassan. The doctor told us that if we had not used antiseptic wet dressings the cases would have been hopeless. C.T. is fairly comfortable—old Hassan is restless, but the other boy is all right. The doctor is efficient, and a very nice man.

“ C.T. had a good night. His hands are very painful, but that is the new skin starting to grow again, of course. His right eye is not as satisfactory as the left one, but will gain strength as he goes along.

“ *Wednesday, August 8.*—C.T. had a bad night and is terribly restless this morning. Poor old one. It must be awful being fed like a baby and not being able to see.

“ Hassan has been delirious since last evening. He is quieter now. The poor old thing *will* smoke endless cigarettes and refuses to eat anything. He makes a boy stay up all night with him to light his cigarettes and hold them up to his swollen mouth.

“ *Thursday, August 9.*—C.T. is getting much better. He is sitting up in a chair to-day. The skin is peeling off his face like anything now and his beard is growing! His eyes are very much better, but are, of course, still covered up.

“ Old Hassan has been raving, but seems quieter now. The other man is getting quite fit—though still bandaged.

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“ We have had a little rain which has cooled the air—praise Allah.”

The worst had passed, and it was indeed with thankfulness that I wrote those last words. I began to be able to take stock of other things. We had lost one baby leopard, one cheetah, and a civet-cat in one week from snake-bite. Snakes were troublesome—even a menace. One crawled up C.T.’s mosquito net while he was in his bed. Luckily Bishara, the tent-boy, came in, saw it, knocked it off, and beat it on the head with a short brush of palm-leaves. It was a nasty snake, about a yard long, and very poisonous. I think it was possibly a puff-adder.

To my horror I learned on the following day that another, exactly like the last, was killed by Bishara—under Errol’s bed this time. I suppose it was the mate of the other. They were dangerous just then because of the long grass, and they came into the hut for shelter from the damp when it rained.

We were all very cheered when the old Moawin arrived early one morning and brought our accumulated mail, which had been lying at Abu Gabra. To our disappointment the wireless set we were awaiting so anxiously did not appear.

I felt sure that the Arabs who were in charge of our *hamla* had simply dumped our stuff somewhere and forgotten it. Rains and impassable country would be their excuse, no doubt.

We received cheery letters from all our friends, which helped to liven things up.

C.T., moreover, was much better—brighter and

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progressing rapidly. Old Hassan was getting better, too, but the doctor said that he would have to be sent to Nyala to be treated, because apart from the burns he was physically unfit. He was an old man, and the shock had been awful for him. I was still feeling a bit shocked myself!

Then, as if to reward us, at last the desired deluge came—enough to fill our little river completely. It looked remarkably fine—and most convincing, *but*—some asinine Fellata had cut all the grass under the big tree and completely spoilt the ‘set’—C.T. said that it was enough to make one profane. I was glad to hear C.T. say that. It proved conclusively that he was getting better! The comment was a just one too! Such happenings as these almost drove us mad. All that shorn grass had to be replanted, and I wondered how long it would take to grow. Even if it took root the look of the place would be changed.

My patient, however, was much better, and that was all that *really* mattered. We were so thankful that he could see, and that the burns had left no awful scars. The new skin beneath was very fit, and all seemed well with him.

Old Hassan, although still suffering from shock, was becoming more sane, or, shall I say, he had more sane moments. He had less power of resistance, because of his age, than C.T., who was strong.

The frogs were croaking, and the light was pleasant after the rain—a lovely golden and crystal light. Kima was catching flying ants, and the boys were reinforcing the thatching on the roof of the hut. I sat watching my friends, the little brown-

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and-white calves, with a few black-and-white ones mixed with them, careering about the place and playing at "the cow jumped over the moon."

It was a peaceful evening, which held no threat of nocturnal tragedy, but tragedy came.

A cad hyena took the baby baboon—young Egbert. I was terribly sad about it—poor little soul. How terrified he must have been! Hyenas got in everywhere somehow at some time. The total of our losses was mounting. The marmoset, Lamps, died a natural death some time before, but he had contracted an unpleasant habit of biting like a rat, so I did not mourn his death as much as I might otherwise have done.

Bill, the ant-bear, was the creature I was most sorry to lose. He was so endearing, with his long snout and affectionate ways. He used to follow me, and whenever I stopped he would immediately thrust his snout between my ankles and go to sleep. He loved nothing better than to be nursed on my lap!

Succeeding days, however, brought their consolations.

C.T. continued to improve, and his face was looking healthier. We had another great rain, and our river remained full. "Praise be," murmured we all.

CHAPTER VII

A CEREMONIAL VISIT

SOME time afterward we caught a hyena in one of the outside traps, and there was great activity during the filming of his arrival in the camp. He was brought in on two poles, *and* muzzled. This muzzling struck me as being an amazing piece of work, and I wondered how the boys had fastened the contrivance on to a savage, snarling, biting hyena. They told me that two men had held its head down with forked poles, while another slipped the palm-leaf-plaited muzzle over it, and that then they had lashed him between the poles and carried him in. But we pointed out to the Arabs that we didn't really like hyenas as pets, so they loosed him and let him run away, and Errol photographed him as he fled into the bush.

The Arabs standing by were thrilled by the whole thing. They laughed and shouted, and when the old beast fled for his life they yelled and waved their arms with glee.

The old Nazir had come down, and, after drinking many glasses of extremely sweet tea with C.T., joined the merry throng of onlookers when the poor hyena was carried in.

After the excitement was over I went to see the Nazir's four wives. I had donned my most feminine garments, some of the few I had brought with me,

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and off I went. When I reached the *hosh*, with its four high encircling walls, the Nazir, who had in the meantime gone ahead on his mule, met me and shook hands (there is always much shaking of hands), and led me into a grass-mat-strewn square enclosure which was roofed with the same plaited grass as that of which the walls were made, and I sat down on an *angareb*,¹ which was draped with carpets and a kind of silk shawl. Then the Nazir whispered to Ali, his young son, who disappeared for a moment and reappeared with four lovely ivory scent-bottles and boxes. These the Nazir presented with smiles and charming words. I was surprised and delighted, and said charming words in return.

Then an elderly man, with a comic face like india-rubber, came in and said that if I would follow him he would conduct me to the women's quarters.

It was all very pleasant. All the wives' huts, four in a line, were in the same enclosure, divided off by grass walls. I was first impressed by the number of pets about—a donkey here and a horse there—kittens and golden-crested cranes, and many small boys and girls. At the first hut I met the nicest-looking wife. Her name was Fatma. She was small and young, with delicate hands and henna-ed finger-nails. But it was her voice which impressed me most, so delightfully soft was it, and cooing and low-pitched. We held hands for a while, then one of the many slave women who were sitting inside the hut approached, bearing a tiny tray on which were tiny cups and the coffee *gabana*.

¹ Native couch.





MAKING AN AERIAL FOR THE WIRELESS

A CEREMONIAL VISIT

My Arabic is still very scanty, but we managed to say quite a lot with a word here and there and signs on my part, and a running, softly purling stream of words and gestures from her. We examined each other's garments and said "*quoise*," which means "nice," "extremely nice," or "simply heavenly," according to the amount of expression you put into it, and she gently patted each of my garments.

Two older women came and sat down—daughters of the Nazir by a long-forgotten marriage. These were simply darlings, sad-faced, but beautiful. After more tea, and by this time I'd had about three cups of coffee and two of tea (albeit small ones), we went to the next hut, and there met Zahara, another wife. She also was small and young and delicate, with slender feet and hands, and henna-ed finger-nails, but she was not so mellow and soft as Fatma. She was more alert and humanly alive-looking, with a dazzling smile, very attractive, but pitched in a higher key than Fatma. We held hands, and I sat down as before, while she sat in front of me, with the first wife and the daughters of the Nazir squatting on the carpeted ground. Here I saw the *gabana* coffee actually being made. A handful of coffee-beans was roasting in an oval tin on a tiny charcoal fire. These roasted beans were put into a small wooden mortar and pounded up with a short iron pestle until they were of exceeding fineness, and then placed in a little pan into which cold water was poured. The pan was then placed on the charcoal fire to boil slowly. When ready, the brew was poured through a small

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wad of fibre, which acted as a strainer, into the *gabana*—a small earthenware, bottle-like affair—and from the *gabana*, through another fibre strainer in its opening, into the tiny cups. We drank freely of this coffee, which was very much sweetened, and freely also of tea, Ali, the young future Nazir, doing the honours by pounding the sugar and pouring out. During all these operations we giggled and talked—at least they talked and I joined in with more gestures and odd words. I had removed my hat, and we examined and approved of each others' hair—theirs beautifully plaited in dozens of tiny plaits which touched their shoulders, mine done up flatly at the sides with dozens of hairpins!

At this juncture the golden-crested crane fell into a hole about three feet deep, whereupon there was a yell of laughter, and all the children ran to the rescue and pulled him out. It was rather a funny sight, because the crane, a tame, docile creature, had been strutting along with his head up, obviously thinking of something miles away, when—*plop!* he fell into the big round hole. I happened to be looking that way and saw the whole thing. It was excessively funny somehow.

After that we went to the next wife, whose name was Bakhita. She was more ungainly than any of the others—larger, taller, and big-boned, and not half so appealing. There we went through the same ceremony of much tea- and coffee-drinking, with the two wives we had previously visited sitting at my feet. By this time the sun was racing down toward the horizon, and there was still one more

A CEREMONIAL VISIT

wife to visit, so on we went to the last hut and met Miriam—a fine-looking woman, very slant-eyed, and carefully oiled, at whose house we had more tea and coffee, with, this time, some small lumps of yellow cake. All these women wore round their waists a red and yellow silk cloth, called a *firka*, which came down to their ankles, and above, round their heads and the upper half of their bodies, was a silk, swathy veil called a *tob*.

After some more friendly chat I took my leave. The old man with the india-rubber face escorted me back to the front grass room, and, after a few words with the old Nazir, I departed down the long carpet to the outer door. I think the memory of my first visit to these Arab ladies will always be one of my most vivid and pleasant ones.

CHAPTER VIII

TWENTY ARAB WOMEN TO TEA

TO our great jubilation our *hamla* had at last arrived. The wireless transmitter and receiving set came with it, and papers and mail also, and for C.T. and Errol there were cigarettes, at which their hearts rejoiced.

Petrol, too, was among the treasures, and would prove useful when the dry weather came, when we intended to go to Nyala on a lion-hunt. It thrilled us to receive the wireless apparatus, for we had great hopes of getting messages through to England.

While we were busy unpacking an Arab brought in a scaly armadillo, which, according to the Habbania, is an exceedingly rare creature in the Sudan. Luckily Errol took some cine pictures of him, for he disappeared the next day. The Nazir thought that he was stolen, because there were no animal tracks in the sand round the box in which he was caged, and the horny scales of the armadillo are treasured by the Arabs beyond rubies. They are made into finger-rings, and if one is worn with a silver ring beside it on the same finger the wearer can never die of thirst in the forest or desert. He will not even feel thirsty—nor even need water!

We made the acquaintance of a funny old cobbler, who was a Bornu, halting in Buram, on a pilgrimage

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to Mecca. These people sometimes take years to reach Mecca, if they ever get there at all, for such of them as are poor have to earn their living and money for the journey as they go along. This old shoemaker made the most amusing native shoes, so I engaged him to copy some of my European shoes in green leather, paying him the astonishing sum of 20 piastres (4s.) per pair. I found out, though, that he should not have got more than 14 piastres—that the old thief and robber had been profiteering! When he finished a new pair of green shoes and I paid him his 20 piastres, his face wreathed in smiles, he said, “I will stay near you and do all the work you wish, for are you not my mother?” He was old, hideous, and pock-marked.

Next came a messenger all the way from Nyala with sweet gifts from our good friend, Mr M. There were cigarettes and vegetable seeds, and actual fresh vegetables too, and papers to read. Moreover, a Fellata girl was being sent down from Nyala as a possible heroine for the picture, and we were awaiting her arrival in great hopes that she would be suitable.

- C.T., although still unable to do any work, was making good progress.

Errol was very busy installing the wireless. When he and I were not doing odd scenes in the scenario he was collecting palm-poles which, lashed together, would serve as the aerial.}

And we had more rain, which was good for the river.

Those were glad, rollicking days. The birds sang

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and whistled, and the little pink and green lizards drowsed happily in the thatch of the roof, when they were not scuttling rapidly over the sand after flies and spiders.

Achmed came to me one day, holding the little floppy leopard in his hands, with this remark:

“Lahm [the leopard's name], him run out of cage, come to kitchen, drink all de milk, then make plenty trouble wid all de chickens.”

I think the ‘rag’ had done old Lahm good. His tummy was incredible! He really was an engaging baby. He had the loveliest innocent blue eyes, and was getting fatter and floppier every day.

The local blacksmith had been making bolts to clamp the palm-posts together for the aerial. His bellows were primitive and very cunning. They consisted of two goatskins joined together with a nozzle at either end, and they produced an excellent draught as he worked the bags up and down one after the other, and directed the current of air on to the coals.

Our Bornu leather-worker was the joy of my life. He was such a cheerful old scoundrel, with twinkly eyes in his pock-marked face, and a minute nose. He looked about seventy, but perhaps was only fifty. Who could tell? As I have explained, he was on a ‘pilgrimage’ to Mecca. I often asked him whether he would ever reach his journey's end, or whether he would finish by being hanged on the way; whereupon he would tremble with laughter, considering it a terrific and a delicious joke.

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This old trout-face *was* a jolly old scoundrel. Besides the green shoes which he had made for me, he could make red and orange ones, but I hadn't tried him out on those colours at that time. He used to come and sit on a grass mat near the tree under which I sometimes wrote, and told everybody who came near that the *Sartel Sitt* was on no account to be disturbed, because she was, as they could quite plainly see, writing important papers to the Government.

We were all longing to get down to organized work again. It seemed ages since we had to break off so dramatically in the midst of it.

In August we experienced some of the hottest days on record, with wind and rain-storms at night. These helped to keep our 'river' full.

In this stream we once found some mud-fish! C.T. said that they had come from the Bahr-el-Arab to the south of us, because there was a continuous chain of connected *bootas*¹ right up to our artificial river, since the rain. The discovery of those *bootas* disposed of my theory that the wind had blown the fish to us and that they had arrived by air!

I often went for delightful rides those early mornings, although our Arab saddles were very hard. I rode the *askari's* horse, and Errol usually managed to find something in horseflesh.

There was always dew on the grass, glistening like a million diamonds. The birds would sing and squawk in the wet-leaved trees, and the air was like

¹ Rain-filled hollows in the ground.

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sunbeams imprisoned in a bowl of ice. But by midday this delightful freshness had given place to an intense heat.

A great wind sprang up one afternoon and blew the wireless 'mast' down. The Arabs brought a new one, which took some time to erect. The old one had not been high enough, and we hoped for better results with the new. The thirty men erecting it were constantly in danger of being squashed beneath it, so often and so unexpectedly did they let it fall. I should think it was extremely heavy; it was certainly very long. Errol had done his work well, and the mast looked equal to the buffeting of the gales. It consisted of two dom palms bolted and lashed together.

While this work was in progress I went to the *suk*, and found my little Loweno—at last! I also discovered a boy to play the part of young Boru. He was an exact match for the older one, but we had yet to discover young Nikitu. The task of 'casting' was a very long and difficult one.

I returned to the camp to find that Kima had adopted a baby monkey which had been brought in by an Arab. He learned to hang on to Kima all day long, and rejoiced in the pet name of "Old Stinker."

It was an occasion of importance, indeed, when the Nazir of the Fellata came on a visit, bringing with him his two daughters. He suggested that they should have principal parts in the picture, because they were such peaches.

They were not—but for sweet hospitality's sake

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we wasted a foot or two of film on them, and took several still photographs of them because they were so ugly!

This old Nazir had travelled miles to come, and see the wonders of which he had heard at Buram. But unfortunately there was no great activity at that time, so I do not think that he could have been very impressed.

That state of 'nothing much being done' was intensely exasperating. We did our best to ginger things up, and sometimes I began to believe that I was in one of those dreams in which you are in a violent hurry to dress and cannot get a single garment on. I wrote in my diary:

"You've got to have the patience of Job in Africa—that and a 'good right.' I'd love to be a man. They come and tell us now that they can't get any native rope in the village, and unless we get it we can't lash the extra bit to the top of the wireless mast. I hate the world to-day!"

The *askari*, Hassan, had got a month's leave, which he needed after the accident, and we missed him very much because he was so very reliable and could perform the minor miracle of getting the Arabs to work. We planted some water-lilies in the river, and they flowered beautifully. They looked simply sweet floating about on the surface, while little birds on long pink legs walked on the leaves.

C.T. entertained the distinguished Fellata visitor under the dark-room tree, together with our own

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Habbanian Nazir. They all loudly sipped very sweet tea out of tiny thick glasses.

The light was pale lemon on the tall green grass; the wind was blowing very gently; the birds were teaching their youngsters how to whistle; and—the Nazirs were imbibing noisily!

The duty of entertaining the wife of the Fellata Nazir fell to me. He had requested that I should see her because she was very keen to “look at me,” as Achmed, our servant, put it. So down she came at four o'clock, escorted by her husband and his head men. She was partly veiled, and sat with me, away from the men. I gave her tea and cake and sweets. She did not at first want to eat, because she said that it would be “shame” for the men to see her eat, but I pointed out that they could not possibly see her as they were sitting some distance off and facing the other way. She was thrilled with the gramophone, and when I told Achmed to take off a certain vocal record, believing that she would not like it, she said “*La, la!*” (“No, no!”) and giggled and appeared to enjoy Jack Smith, or whoever it was, singing. She giggled unrestrainedly at the laughing records (they were foul!), and begged for more.

In consequence of this entertainment I had to have about ten Arab ladies to tea the next day. I thought it tactful. As this ‘mere visitor’ had had tea with me, I was really obliged to have our Nazir’s wives as well. There were only four of them, the allotted number, but his household contained dozens of daughters by other marriages.

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I don't think he could remember how many wives he had had in the past—he had divorced so many. He is permitted to divorce as often as he chooses, so long as he is married to no more than four wives at a time. One hears of abandoned wives all over his *dar*,¹ and one sees a multitude of children ranging from forty years to one month old—all his!

These old Arabs certainly don't believe in allowing women to bore them.

That tea-party was great fun, and went off with great *éclat*. I had invited only ten Arab ladies, but twenty arrived!! Achmed bowed and smiled nicely, and made them happy. I wonder what the villain said to them. I can imagine that he made the most of his opportunity, and he can now boast that he is one of the few outside men who has ever had a really good look at the old Nazir's youthful and beautiful wives. I suspect the wives enjoyed it too, because our Achmed was a very engaging young man.

They all ate lots of cakes—there were no eggs for breakfast the next day, the cook having used so many in cake-making—they drank innumerable glasses of exceedingly sweet tea, and insisted upon hearing those unspeakable laughing records over and over again. They nudged each other with delight, and put their hands together and said "*Wallahi!*" ("By God!") and burst into peals of laughter.

Never before, they declared, had they heard such

¹ Country.

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a strange machine. The Fellata woman took rather a proprietary attitude, as if to say, "See, that's just what I told you."

They were altogether fascinating—great babies, with, of course, the addition of a great deal of elemental passion.

When they saw the car they immediately requested to be driven back to the village after the party. So off we went with young Ali, the Nazir's son, sitting in front with Errol and me, as by ancient right, for we always let him ride on the lorry. All the twenty ladies were in the back with Achmed. I must add, though, that the old chap who acted as a kind of *aide* to the Nazir and bodyguard-in-chief to the wives was also in attendance, although very much squashed. In the background twelve old slave women sat and kept their eyes well glued to their mistresses. Achmed told me afterward that the Fellata lady had smiled very prettily at him when in polite greeting he had said "*Taiyibin?*" ("Are you well?") in passing. They all enjoyed the ride, chattering like children, and burbling with happiness. We drove them up to the Nazir's *hosh*, where they sprang down, the old man Nazir meeting and shaking hands with us before he shooed them all into the *hosh*. Then we took the other lady-wife home. This lady, who had remained in the car at her own invitation, issued an order to Achmed: "Go on ahead, my tent is farther off." On we went obediently, and, after decanting her, turned the car and spun homeward down the village path, hearing as we went a 'lu-luing' from





KIMA AND OLD STINKER

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dozens of women's tongues to cheer us on our way.

Young Ali, still in the front of the car with us, smiled at the people we passed with an amusing air of haughty condescension.

We were expecting all the people for the cast to come in the next day. We had by that time got actors for all the characters except a young one for Nikitu. We had found a little darling for the heroine.

We turned in full of expectation, and hoped for a good night's rest, but we were almost washed out before morning. Terrific wind and rain tore at the hut and the trees near by. The world looked like a sponge in a full bath in the early morning light.

When the people came in we made 'contracts' with the more important ones, which were duly witnessed by the Nazir. This measure was necessary, for we knew that they might otherwise go away in the middle of the picture.

It was delightfully cool after the rain, and everybody was busy and happy. Some Koreish boys from Kafia Kingi were set to dig a large square hole in the ground to store our petrol, in case it should evaporate if left in the fierce heat. Old Stinker (Kima's adopted baby), who was growing into the quaintest little monkey, was having simply amazing games with his foster-parent. Old Stinker's soul's delight was custard—any kind, boiled or baked. He sat on the lowest branch of their tree and squawked and squealed until he fell off, or

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until Kima jumped up and fetched him down in his arms to his beloved pudding. When he saw Achmed serving us at the table close by he began to get greatly worked up and excited, and ended by squealing or crying if his share did not come quickly. Nothing else thrilled him. All the other food left him cold. He wanted custard—lots of custard!

That evening the wireless set was working properly, and it was the greatest thrill that we had experienced for ages when we heard the Piccadilly Hotel Dance Band at about twelve o'clock. Errol woke us and said, "If you want to hear *My Blue Heaven* come now." I shot out of my bed like a rocket, had the ear-phones on in an instant—and, lo! I heard. It was very intermittent, and there was an amazing lot of howling, but I heard music from London in Buram, in the depths of Africa. That was the wonder of it all. In Buram! I wish you could see the wildness of it—sense its loneliness and feel its mosquitoes! You are bitten even in the day-time at that part of the year, and at night you live in a buzzing inferno. Buram, where the rank grass grows up to your waist and Haskanit grass tortures your tender flesh wherever you go! Buram, where hyenas howl and leopards steal your pets! It was strange—incredibly strange—to hear the announcer say, "*I want my Dance*, played by the Piccadilly Hotel Dance Band." One item was entitled *I Thank the Moon more than Anything* (or words to that effect), and Errol said that it sounded 'simply stunning!' Achmed, being called



FATMA AGAIN



GHALI TAG ED DIN, NAZIR OF THE HABBANIA

TWENTY ARAB WOMEN TO TEA

to listen, remarked, "Oh, *Sartel Sitt*, same like gramophone."

We now entered on a very busy period. All day and every day we were photographing. At first the women were particularly difficult to manage, and, in their extreme shyness, they were loath to raise their eyes. But they improved gradually, and even took pride in the fact that they had been chosen to act. It was my task to manage them, to talk to them gently, and to make them feel at home. They did not understand why we wanted them to act in various places away from the camp, when there were so many places, seemingly quite as good, within the camp, which would save them walking a few yards.

We had another, and in some ways a pathetic, interlude of hospitality. Ali's mother came to tea. She was an interesting woman, and superior to the Nazir's present wives, but I should think that her talkativeness made her rather trying. She talked intelligently, however, and was wrapped up in young Ali, her only child. It appeared that she was now only a cast-off wife of the Nazir.

So with work and work the days sped by. There had been no rain for some time, the heat was intense, and we were all gasping, but the country was still flooded, and we were marooned and therefore could not go very far afield. I had given up thinking about mosquitoes: they were ever with us. They bit at all hours of the day and night, finding an acceptable home amid the shrub and grass which

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abounded everywhere, and in the trees and swamp in front of us. The rainy season's dire effects had to be endured. I sometimes thought that I loved the place in spite of mosquitoes, but it demanded an effort now and then.

CHAPTER IX

BURAM DAYS

HOW the wind swept through everything! Again and again I expected the grass hut to tumble down on our heads, and yet it escaped disaster. The raging and swaying of the large-leaved branches of the trees made a noise like a booming sea. But those Buram days were pleasant days, although sometimes trying.

I turn again to my diary record, with its jottings of things great and small. It mirrors our daily life—our hopes and fears, our difficulties and what we considered our triumphs.

“*Sunday, September 9.*—The little monkey we call Old Stinker is growing a fine crop of silky hair and is beginning to look less naked and like a mouse. He becomes more and more amusing. That young monkey eats and eats. Nobody knows why he does not burst like an over-inflated balloon. He watches me with fascinated eyes when I sew or mend things. How C.T. and Errol tear their socks! I believe it is the way they tug them on. We had a great wind-storm again last night. It looks as if the rain is beginning to tail off.

“I hope we can find a small Nikitu soon—things are getting serious. Boru has had evil tidings from his village to-day. Somebody came and told him that his brother had died suddenly, so he has gone

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off for some days. It's a grand, grand game of patience.

"We started filming early in the morning, just as the light was clear enough, and stopped during the hottest hours, beginning again at about 2 P.M. and continuing until the sun set.

"*Monday, September 10.*—To-day has been supremely successful in everything. We find that the people can act naturally, and that Fatma, the lovely girl we have to play the part of Loweno, the heroine, is a positive gem. She is a poem of grace and very beautiful. All her actions are pretty. She dipped water from the river into a gourd, and it was one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen. Her braided hair fell in dozens of little plaits on to her shoulders, and her slender brown waist and perfect back rippled gently as she moved.

"There is always a snag, though—we find that Halima is going to have a baby. *Isn't* it maddening? Just when we were congratulating ourselves on our success in getting an ideal Halima too! Of course, we shall now have to get some one else. I've got my eye on somebody, but as she is a divorced wife of the Nazir, there may be some difficulty. I wish to heaven the *fikki*¹ who is going to play the sheikh would get a move on and come back from Nyala—we are taking other stuff, but we want to get the opening of the picture done. We had the star woman dancer down from the village. She danced a queer sort of 'Eastern wall-design' dance.

¹ Holy man.

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There were six women sitting on the ground in front of her beating a drum, clapping hands, and singing in time to her movements.

“ *Tuesday, September 11.*—Glorious morning, green and golden, but it’s going to be hot.

“ I asked my old shoemaker what he will do when I go away—for he will not be able to rob anyone else, and his answer was, ‘ When you go I go with you, for you are my mother.’

“ I replied, ‘ Yes, to Mecca with all my money,’ and he roared with laughter and thought that that *was* a joke. The dear old villain is making me some red mosquito boots now. You never know with him what kind of shoes you are going to get. It all depends upon whether or not he has been to a party—a *marissa*¹ party.

“ The little girl who plays the part of baby Loweno is a duck. She is tiny and deliciously dainty. I gave her two strings of green beads after I got back from my ride this morning, which thrilled her to the core. She has just had her hair braided by several old ladies from the village. They sat round her ‘ pulling her head almost off,’ as she told me, but very pretty and sleek it looks after their combined and determined efforts.

“ *Wednesday, September 12.*—It is cool this evening—the sky is overcast and there is a wind blowing. Kima is bouncing up and down teasing his baby, who is yelling blue murder.

“ The two young ground hornbills can walk about now, and they are a perfect nuisance, so tame

¹ Native beer.

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have they become. One of them chose to sleep in the *bet*¹ this morning. The trouble with them is that they make such a horrid moaning noise, even when they're thoroughly happy.

"We are hunting now for another woman to play Halima, the wife of the sheikh. We've let the other one go.

"Boru hasn't returned yet from burying his brother, and the sheikh hasn't returned from Nyala either. It's a great life if you don't weaken. Africa is a synonym for patience.

"*Thursday, September 13.*—C.T.'s birthday, and therefore a festive day.

"We've got all our characters at last. Hurray! Hurray! And a new Halima, who is as good as the first one, I think. Everybody was tried out to-day on dummy film, and they acted quite beautifully—marvellous people. I hope that sheikh will appear soon. I think that the rains are about over. We might get a little more, but not much.

"I like Boru more and more. He ought to look magnificent on the screen.

"*Friday, September 14.*—Friday and *suk* day, and I shan't have to go and be stared at by all the wretched Arabs any more! It was an awful ordeal for me going up there with Errol to peer into their faces to try to find our people.

"Kasim, the camera-boy, is grinning sheepishly and flitting ridiculously about with a huge home-made butterfly-net, catching butterflies for C.T. And everybody is pulling his leg and calling him

¹ House.

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‘mighty hunter.’ We need the butterflies in the opening forest pictures. Kasim is a quaint lad and very apt at anything, especially things mechanical.

“*Saturday, September 15.*—We had a great morning of filming. We did all the opening shots in the forest and also the coming into the open glade of Mazumu with the baby Boru. I think these natives are splendid natural actors.

“*Sunday, September 16.*—We continued the mother Mazumu sequence with baby. I only hope the real mother won’t be as difficult to handle in future as she has been to-day. She wasn’t a bit keen on the baby being held by another woman. She wanted to play the part herself! Strange—one even finds vanity among natives who don’t even know what a camera is. We shall have to bribe her heavily to allow the infant to be near the snake to-morrow. I shall quite sympathize with her if she is slightly nervy about it!

“*Monday, September 17.*—A conversation between Achmed and myself:

“ACHMED. ‘Fatna say her like um new shoes.’
[‘Fatna would like some new shoes.’]

“MYSELF. ‘You mean *Fatma*.’

“A. ‘Yes, *Fatna*.’

“M. ‘*Fatma—m-a—ma—ma—Fatma.*’

“A. ‘Yess, *Sartel Sitt—Fatana.*’

“M. ‘O Lord! *How* do you pronounce the name? I hear some saying *Fatma*, others *Fatna*, and now you say “*Fatana.*” Which is it?’

“A. ‘Same like you say it—*Fatna.*’

“M. ‘You mean *Fatma.*’

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"A. 'Yes, *Sartel Sitt*—Fatana.'

"Now this is the kind of thing that sort of makes me go all funny in the head and explode with something approaching profanity, or else simply fall back quietly in a dead faint!

"I'm spending all my spare time mixing up boric lotion. The whole tribe seems to have suddenly developed eye trouble. Of course it's all rot, but they happened to see me give some of the stuff to one of the 'actors' in a lovely lime-juice bottle, so there you are!"

"Our poor old Nazir is still ill with fever. C.T. or Errol goes to see the old man every day to make him take his medicine.

"Old Stinker is growing incredibly and becoming a real live monkey. He is getting bold enough, when his beloved custard arrives, to jump off the tree to the ground, unaided by Kima. He and Kima rampage in and out of the trees and adore life.

"The water is drying up in the *boota*, so we shall have to get the well made deeper, and draw water from it soon.

"I'm waiting for C.T. and Errol to get the cameras set up, and a python has been located. I'm just wondering what kind of a time we're going to have taking that snake sequence to-day.

"*Tuesday, September 18.*—Our hut was almost blown down last night, and how the wireless poles stood up to that uproarious wind nobody knows.

"Then the rain came and simply swamped the place. The shrubs and grass are almost flattened out. My 'garden,' consisting of a few tomato

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plants, strangely enough, has escaped. I suppose it was because the thorn *zareba*¹ round it broke the force of the wind.

"We had a wonderful day yesterday, and got some magnificent snake and baby pictures, which ought to make everybody jump. What pleases me is that every foot of it is *real* and *unfaked*. The baby was really under the hanging snake when the woman dashed in to get it, and all the other shots are real. Snake and baby in the *same* picture. (This is the second time we've taken this, because the first woman had to go away.) Then there was the stabbing of the snake by an Arab—a magnificent piece of work.

"We are all so bucked we don't know what to do with ourselves! We are really getting on now. Every Arab wears a knife on his arm, and it sometimes makes me smile when we're among a mob of them to remember that until only a short while ago these people would undoubtedly have robbed us, or perhaps cut our throats! Tremendous strides have been made in the Sudan since the War.

"The country south-east of us is still in a very uncertain state, though. The Nuers are always causing trouble of some sort. I had a letter from some one serving in the Sudan, who told me that the Nuers attacked Duk Fayeirl on the 6th of August in large numbers, but that the police there—a native sergeant and fifteen men—beat them off with a loss to the Nuers of forty-eight killed and about eighty wounded. Not bad for one sergeant of *askari* and

¹ Enclosure.

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fifteen men! And he added that after that event the Government had fifty of the most truculent ones taken up to Khartoum, where a proper respect for the Government was instilled into their souls by taking them round, pointing out to them the aeroplanes, fort, and armoury, and the strength and majesty of the Government generally."

A story is told of an occasion during their visit when they all flocked in a body down to the Nile to bathe, before being taken to Omdurman on a tram to see the sights. While they were bathing they heard the clang of the tram's bell, so without more ado they rushed, naked as they were, in a body, waving their unaccustomed robes at the tram-conductor to make him wait while they crowded on to the tram, which then proceeded down the grand 'promenade' of Khartoum, much to the shocked amazement of the populace, who were not used to the sight of naked Nuers in their midst!

I hope that when we go back down that way we shan't find any homicidal maniacs.

"Errol left his helmet out in the rain again last night. That hat is a mess. First he plays boats with it in the Bahr-el-Arab, then he runs the car over the brim, and since then it has been out in many a storm. And the old duck's feathers are still stuck in at a jaunty angle on the side. If C.T. hadn't blown himself up complete with hat he might still have had his. As it is he now wears a very extraordinary affair (helmet variety) he found in one of the chop-boxes. 'A spare' I believe he called it.

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"It is awfully hot. I can't imagine why. It ought to be getting cooler now.

"*Friday, September 21.*—While I was brushing my hair this morning I saw the head of a snake showing through a crack in the mud floor—merely a foot away from me. He seemed to be staring at me, and as soon as I stepped back he withdrew his beastly head, and I called Bishara to come and help to kill him. I did not feel in good enough form to tackle him by myself. I pulled up a slab of the hard mud of the floor, and found him curled up in the hollow beneath—a horrid snake, black and deadly poisonous. He struck at us, and Bishara blipped him on the head with a billet of wood. He writhed and made an awful fuss for a bit, and then Bishara took him out on the end of his piece of wood. I'm looking out for his mate—they are usually in pairs.

"It's bad enough to have them outside, without their coming to live in the same hut I sleep in.

"One never knows whether the continuous rustlings in the reed walls are caused by frogs, lizards, or snakes. There are dozens of frogs and lizards whose regular dwelling is the hut. We can't sleep out yet because of odd showers of rain.

"We went out in the car to look for 'locations' for the great bull-caravan shots, which come in the beginning of the picture. We went out to a favourite spot of mine—I visit it almost every morning when I ride—and we have decided to use it for some of the scenes. It is real 'forest,' and ought to photograph well.

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“ We sent off a batch of film—that wonderful snake sequence—to Nyala to-day. It will be posted from there to England.

“ *Saturday, September 22.*—It is a cool day, and I rejoice.

“ Poor Errol is having awfully bad luck with his wireless poles. They are new ones and are being erected in a different place, but unfortunately one pole snapped before they could get it up. It seems as if there is a fate against our sending messages through to England.

“ C.T. has a small Fellata patient. This boy came into the camp the day before yesterday with the back of his head laid open—an awful gash, deep down, showing his skull. Achmed gleaned the information that the boy had fallen out of a tree.

“ Well, C.T. has been dressing the wound, which, by the way, is healing rapidly, and to-day he has discovered the truth of the matter. The small Fellata did *not* fall out of a tree, but was whanged over the head by the Nazir's young son—not Ali, but one smaller. The attacker says that Ali is not going to be the next Nazir at all, because he himself, and none other, is going to be he. And it looks rather likely. His reason for whanging the small Fellata on the nut was because he, the small Nazir, had remonstrated with him repeatedly for ‘walking with Arab boys,’ and told him that a mere dirty Fellata had no right in the world to walk with Arab boys. So when the ‘dirty Fellata’ persisted our minute Arab just blipped him on the head with a club, and warned him that if he again attempted

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to walk with Arabs he would not merely break his head, but spear him right through the heart! And this little Arab devil is only about eight years old.

“ *September 23, 24, and 25.*—All blanks!

“ *Wednesday, September 26.*—And a jolly morning. The previous dates are blanks because something momentous happened—something that shatters all belief in myself and grinds my spirit down into the slough of despond!

“ I had a fantastic and quite illogical belief that I was immune, and now, after years of living in some of the worst fever-stricken places in Africa, I’ve had it—fever! Isn’t the thing too tragic?

“ Of course, what really happened in the past was that I’d had suppressed fever or some kind of slow fever that never properly broke out, owing, no doubt, to the nightly dose of quinine. But the Buram mosquitoes were too good for me this time, and in spite of the nightly quinine, they got me.

“ I’ve nursed a good many fever cases, and so recognized the symptoms early one bleak morn when I shivered and couldn’t get warm. Then the usual hot and sweating spells happened.

“ I’m better to-day, but full of quinine and regrets. A bit shaky too.

“ Anyhow, I seem to have some luck, because I put on my slippers (after shaking them as usual) this morning, and I felt something tickling my bare toes and thought that it was only a long hair or something, but as it persisted I took my slipper off, and out ran a fat black spider.

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“ Errol’s helmet gets more *dégringolé* every day—I wish a train could run over it.

“ The heat has been fierce—but it’s cooler to-day. I’m feeling a bit shaky, so I’ll go and lie down again.

“ Oh, wait a moment, I *must* tell you about Bishara. Now you know young Bishara is a dear, good, very stupid, fattish lad who does camp work (and always buttons up my pyjamas so thoroughly that I can never get into them). Well, young Bishara also gets high temperatures at times, because he eats much meat—gorges on meat—and then he comes to me and says ‘Fever’ in a sad voice. I always receive him very seriously, and feel his head and then take his wrist and feel his pulse.

“ Just see this—I’m lying on a long chair now, in front of the open doorway of the hut, with a wet bandage thing on my head. Bishara appears in the doorway, with a concerned face, comes up shaking his head, saying ‘*Mush koise*’ (‘ Very bad ’). He stops by my side, and with a firm hand removes my wet head-pad, lays the firm hand on my head, then stoops down, and, taking my hand, puts his fingers round my wrist, shakes his head, murmurs sorrowfully ‘*Mush koise*’ once more, and walks softly out on tiptoes. If you could only see and know Bishara you’d love this. You see, he doesn’t know what a pulse is. He is very fat-tummied, very shiny-skinned, has the eyes of a patient cow, and he is very, very stupid.

“ Kima and Old Stinker had a bath yesterday. I

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practically forced Errol into performing the operation, for it's hard to refuse 'a sick man' such a small service. I remembered this in time and played on his sympathies. If I'd waited until to-day it would have been too late!

"You should see my garden—it's growing like smoke. I'm only afraid that we shan't be here to have the corn-cobs when they come, but it's fun having a garden, even if you can't stay to eat what has been grown in it.

"I don't feel quite so yellow now. So that's good. I shan't lie down yet.

"Somehow I seem to be wanting to take a bit of notice to-day!

"Adolph is stalking about crowing again. That cockerel is becoming unmanageable. And Kima and Stinker are making friends with the white mother-goat and her black little goat. Where she got him from I can't imagine. She is the same goat who painstakingly suckled Old Tuckin. Do you remember? But Tuckin went the way of the ant-bear—into a *marfain's*¹ larder. Poor little Old Tuckin—that was a tragedy!

"On our 'staff' we have one, Adam by name, the boy of boys for animals. Adam is so fond of animals that he has built himself a hut with open sides which are wire-netted, and which is also partitioned off inside with wire-netting. In one partition the 'dangerous' animals sleep, such as leopards and cheetahs, and in the other the 'tame' creatures, like hawks and owls—and Adam. It is a nice cosy

¹ Hyena.

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little arrangement, and Adam doesn't mind Zoo odours. He's a wonderful soul.

"Achmed says that we can't get the bulls of this village for those scenes in the picture, because all the 'bulls' are cows with young calves!

"*Thursday, September 27.*—We've had a busy day pegging out 'locations' with sticks on which are marked the numbers of the scenes to be shot in those particular places. To-morrow we hope to have a great day photographing the arrival of the huge caravan, at the place where the village is going to be made, and then doing the same cavalcade again, trekking through forest. It's going to be a grand sight, and I hope they will all turn up in time. But, you never know with these Arabs. They're so unreliable and slow! Some will turn up at the appointed time, while others may streak in about sunset. *Inshalla*—we shall see.

"I've still got a little fever.

"*Friday, September 28.*—We are all dead beat, but full of good cheer—we've made some glorious pictures to-day. The *hamla* swaying by was extremely picturesque, and ought to look impressive on the screen. We found some superb forest scenery for it to trek through. To-morrow is going to be a continuation with 'close ups' of the same thing.

"I've got to keep my eyes pretty well glued on to our actors, though, because they *will* insist upon changing their garments and wearing or not wearing ornaments when they shouldn't. It's worrying, when you know that hundreds of feet of film may be wasted, and that the whole difficult scene may

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have to be re-enacted in the blistering sun because some ignorant or careless person disobeyed instructions. I had two instances of this to-day—glaring ones. The wife of the sheikh in the story—who is a difficult, wretched woman to handle anyway—was the transgressor, but luckily I spotted it in time, while C.T. and Errol still had their two Bell Howells and Sinclair cameras going on the job.

“ Good night, people.

“ *Saturday, September 29.*—We started at sunrise, and knocked off for three hours at 10.30. The bulls can't work for more than a couple of hours at a time, because of the huge weight of their cumbrous, though decorative, saddles and trappings. They just lie down if they are loaded for too long. It is now noon, and we're going off into the forest at 1 P.M. to finish some more scenes. We are going to take magnesium candle 'shots' to-night. It will be interesting.

“ Three red and grey birdies are having a fearful scrap up in the tree just above my head. They're tiny creatures, and simply lovely. There are so many glorious birds and butterflies in the Sudan.

“ *Monday, October 1.*—We got the shot of shots to-day—people, bulls, horses, donkeys, and cows all crossing the little river. I've never seen such movement and colour, and incident too. People fell off—loads crashed—there was so much shouting, and cries, and laughter that I could hardly hear myself think. I noticed that the horses and people on the bank were marvellously silhouetted in the water, and got C.T. to photograph the

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reflection as well. If it comes out on the screen it's going to be beautiful.

"Then we photographed them all on the other side—got pictures of camping scenes at dusk: fires, cooking-pots, horses and animals tethered to nearby trees. Then night 'shots' of the sheikh with his wife and the two babies—the future heroes of the picture. They were grouped round a fire. We got our magnesium flares placed in holes two feet deep in the ground over which wood was stacked. When the flares were lit the effect was just like that of real wood fires.

"I was the tiniest bit rattled when dusk came because there were so many Arabs all jostling round me—most of them were on horses, but some were on foot, and all had spears and knives, were very excited, and made Bedlam's own din. They are excitable people. Some of them had to be forced out of the way to enable us to photograph the scenes, and they resisted sometimes with ill-humour and loud protests. Everything was all right, of course, but it was nervy work all the same.

"*Tuesday, October 2.*—Yesterday's performance cost £24 for the use of bulls and other animals. It would have cost almost three times as much in England, no doubt. Horses used to be £4, now the Government has raised the price to £12. I think the gentle Arab in the Sudan realizes that it is desirable and profitable to be under British rule.

"First-fruits from my garden to-day: three small, smooth red tomatoes! Adam took me down and with much pride showed me.

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"Our new 'English-speaking' dragoman arrived last night with much luggage. He was dressed in a bright sweater and shorts, with 'holey' socks and dago-looking shoes.

"We can't bear it—so he is going straight back again this afternoon. He looks as if he would be worse than Hassan, the ex-head boy, and I am sure not worth £15 a month.

"Achmed is good enough for what we want, and we understand enough Arabic now to know whether he is translating properly or not.

"We had a terrific windstorm last night—sand blew into the hut in bucketsful. And then it rained. I expect we shall be having the hot winds soon, and the sweet mosquito will then disappear—we are getting rather tired of him.

"Lions roar round the camp these nights.

"*Thursday, October 4.*—We have been busy getting the grass and poles in for our village, and expect it to be finished in a few days. Then we shall be able to do as much work as we like—go right on filming, without any more delays, excepting accidents and illness, of course.

"I shall be glad when the country dries up—mainly from a health point of view, of course.

"The old sheikh comes down to tea quite often, and he adores the gramophone. He is more sophisticated than the Nazir, having been educated a bit, and is therefore, probably, more of a problem. He seems to appreciate the better records (no laughing ones, for instance). He loves *Only a Rose* from *The Vagabond King*, and Kreisler's records. It

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appears that there is a little jealousy and distrust between him and the old Nazir. The reason is that the sheikh's brother was Nazir before the present one, but the Government thought it wise to depose him, because he was a bad man, and put the present Nazir in his place. But this brother, the sheikh, as we call him, was considered a good enough fellow, so they left him. Really, I believe the idea to be a good one, because the old Nazir and the sheikh seem to balance each other.

"He told us that all the Habbania Arabs thought, when we first came here, that we were only wheedling them into service by paying them, and that they were afraid that it was our intention to force them later on to go back with us to be enslaved in England—'just like the Turks did,' as Achmed puts it.

"*Friday, October 5.*—*Suk* day, and Arabs are trekking in on donkeys and bulls and on foot too, from all directions, as they always do on Fridays, which is their market day.

"C.T. and I went out in the car and collected some more poles and sticks this morning, and the Arabs have commenced working on the huts for the village we are making for the film.

"*Saturday, October 6.*—The village is going strong, and C.T. thinks that it is a pity to let a whole new village go begging, and that perhaps we ought to live in it ourselves!

"Lions again last night, and a leopard coughed just under the dark-room tree.

"*Sunday, October 7.*—They talk about the cold

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winds, which will come after these hot ones. I'd like to feel them just once.

"I had a glorious gallop this morning—the *askari's* horse went like lightning, and it was exciting and altogether delicious before the sun was up, feeling the wind blowing through my hair.

"*Wednesday, October 10.*—I didn't sleep all night for aches—I don't think it's fever either—my arm gave me particular discomfort during the night. It has been bitten by something.

"Bishara killed another black snake in my room this morning, just on the side where I get in and out of bed. It was lying in a crack in the mud floor, and was the fourth to appear in that room alone. Bishara and Achmed told me this morning that they killed two there while we were making pictures the other day. There were the two before that—the one which crawled up C.T.'s mosquito net while he was ill, and another which was found in Errol's room.

"Of course, the bite on my arm isn't snake-bite! I should probably have been buried by now if it had been. The place is simply infested with bugs and pests of all kinds.

"The village is finished, and C.T. and Errol have been taking a few odd shots of the three children who are acting in the film.

"*Thursday, October 11.*—To-day we started filming in the village, which looks very real and pretty. These children we've got for the principal parts act beautifully.

"We lit a smoke-bomb in the hut to-day in the

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hope that the snakes living in the mud floor would leave—we didn't see any, but a very stunned brace of frogs staggered out of the front door. The colony of lizards didn't seem to mind much.

"Kima and Old Stinker did some acting for the films this morning. They are being used as young Loweno's pets.

"Poor old Adam, the animal-boy, has an awfully sore foot. He has guinea-worm in it, and it's swollen right up like a football—we're doing all we can to relieve it.

"*Saturday, October 13.*—I'm beginning to feel all shaky. The mosquitoes are simply incredible here. They are as bad as in the worst place I've ever stayed at in Africa. They simply fly about in clouds, and sting like mad.

"*Sunday, October 14.*—It is slightly cooler to-day, there being clouds in the sky.

"My poor Kima has toothache. That wretched vet in London, instead of drawing those teeth as I told him to do, simply broke them, with the consequence that they have decayed and the air has been getting right up into the roots of them.

"I wish I could draw them myself. I shall take him to Nyala when I go, and ask the doctor to extract the wretched things.

"To-night is rather an important one from the point of view of wireless-transmitting. Errol is going to try to get through to London. We sent a cable some time ago giving this date for people to try to pick us up.

"Lions and hyenas made an awful noise again

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last night, and a snake chased a frog on my floor. I'm getting rather bored with these beasts—they seem to get more numerous. Why should they come and live under *my* floor when they have heaps of good dry ground in the various other huts! There is a terrific odour of lion and hyena bait all over the place. It is down under some trees quite a distance off, and it simply howls to heaven.

"The grass is very high now, and is beginning to turn yellow. We shall soon be having grass-fires.

"We've had a weary time during the rains.

"*Later.*—The sky is clear, so there seems to be some chance of getting our wireless message through. Errol has the car up by the aerial mast, and has fixed a belt from the engine to the generator. I don't know exactly how or why, except that if it will work it will save Kasim's arms. It appears to be hopeless to get through with the generator worked by hand, because the 'note,' although quite strong, is very unsteady. I do hope Errol will be successful.

"I've been in the wars to-day. You know that I got a spider-bite on my arm the other day, which is extremely painful. Now I've gone and got my finger jammed in the joints of our collapsible table! During the painful moments after that episode, as I subsided on my bed, a largish black spidery-looking thing bit me in several places on the shoulder under my shirt, and all on the same side. Everything hurts—finger, arm, and shoulder—and that's that and rather humorous, though painful. It might have been a large warrior-ant that bit me. I didn't look for him, I didn't care.

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"I wish I was at home with somebody sympathetic to hold my hand and fuss over me a little!

"Yes, that's it—I want to be comforted and fussed over—just this once. I'd better go and tell C.T. and Errol!

"Good night."

CHAPTER X

NYALA

IT was a time of general rejoicing when, after being marooned for three and a half months at Buram, we decided to take the risk of driving the lorry over the still very damp country to pay a visit to the District Commissioner, who was then at Kubbe.

We reached our destination after about six hours' travelling. The road proved better than we had expected it would be, although we stuck for three-quarters of an hour in a bog; but after that our progress was somewhat smoother. We were going to make the most of the short time that our work permitted us to spend with Mr L., the D.C.—an enchanting host. We began the next day with a jolly ride on his lovely ponies, and then, after lunch, we returned to Buram, arriving rather late the same night after missing our way. We were pleased to find that Hassan, the *askari*, had returned from his rest after the accident, and had brought his wife back with him.

Achmed said, "She is little one."

We got the boys to work clearing the grass off the footpaths and cutting a wide track from the Kubbe and Abu Matarik roads to our camp.

There were to be Arab horse-shows in November in the Sudan, and the Governor-General was coming

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to inspect the various tribes at that time. It is only once in a while that these outlying parts see any official, except the lonely D.C. of the very large district. The Arabs were excited about the coming of the *Hakim el'Amm*, and spoke of nothing else for weeks. The young bloods spent their time practising their ponies, for there were to be races, among other events, in which their horses would be required to display their prowess.

The Khamsin winds were blowing. These are hot winds straight from the Sahara. You can always smell a desert wind. It is dry and carries an alluring scent of dry yellow grass. There was a haze from grass-fires in the air, and we knew that we should soon have comparatively cool weather.

Kima and Old Stinker were prancing up and down and rolling over each other. They were deliciously happy, and felt the change in the weather, or sensed the approaching change, which I always feel with a thrill of delight. There is always a promise of adventure in the approach of a new season.

Errol went down with fever and was very ill indeed, but I was glad that it had broken out at last, because he had felt ill for some time. I gave him the usual thirty grains of quinine, with ten to follow in the evening, and continued with ten at intervals the next day until he had had another thirty grains. Then I gradually decreased the dose.

Meanwhile we were having a grass-roof shelter made, under which we could sit during the hottest

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hours. We needed it, for the big fig-trees were losing their old leaves, while the young ones were bursting their buds, and the sun shone through the gaps, causing us to chase about every few minutes, with our chairs and tables, in search of new shady patches.

In the immediate future we intended to go to Nyala and stay for a week's holiday with Mr M., the District Commissioner there, when, after inspecting the *dar*, he passed back through Buram. After the rather feverish time of the rains the air there would be dry and cool—a great advantage.

Achmed and the other boys vigorously washed and ironed in preparation for the visit, and were just as elated as we were at the idea of getting away.

Mr M. returned sooner than we had expected, and surprised us at luncheon. He was accompanied by Mr L. of Kubbe. We had not expected him until the evening. It was arranged that we should leave with him the following morning.

We played poker after dinner, and Errol, happily free of fever, relieved the company of a lot of piastres.

We started off from Buram at 6.30 A.M. the next morning, and travelled easily all day. We stopped at a place called Gadad and had a light lunch. We met the rascally old Nazir of the Fellata there—old Abu Hameira—but we did not see his wife—or I should say his chief wife. He had four legitimates and I don't know how many other—'relatives' shall I say?

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We lunched under a big aradeiba-tree. The aradeiba is a large umbrella-like tree with masses of short, feathery leaves, and is considered the shadiest in the Sudan. Leopards usually choose the aradeiba as being a convenient place on which to stretch their spotty limbs during the heat of the day, and lions prefer their shade to all others. It is therefore just as well to approach these trees with a certain amount of wariness. Tired but happy, we lit a fire that night and listened to the boys chattering away as they washed the plates we had used for dinner. It was a never-ending surprise to me how our African servants could produce a perfectly cooked and served dinner anywhere and at any time, on the road or off, so quickly.

Mr M., like ourselves, wore an old sweater with many honourable darns in it, and everybody was supremely happy, talking about shot-guns, dogs, and game.

Kima and Stinker were with us warming their blue tummies by the fire, after having had a generous nip of *crème de menthe*, for the night was chilly!

Next day we travelled through parts of the country which reminded us of Rhodesia, until we hit some bad patches of *goz*.¹ The people were stamping out a road, cutting the overgrown grass on the tracks, and knocking out ant-heaps and bumps. Mr M. had seen to it that the Governor-General should have a 'road' on which to drive his car when he passed that way.

Failing to reach Nyala, we slept on the road

¹ Sand.

NYALA

again that night. One reason for the delay was that we had to struggle through a plague of flies and small flying beetles that got into our eyes and clothes, and bit and stung astoundingly. It was just dark when we encountered them, and they came at us in a veritable cloud for miles—C.T. could hardly drive. Luckily, I had some dark glasses which he could wear to prevent them from temporarily blinding him. The other reason was that Mr M.'s car had an accident.

We resumed the journey next morning, and arrived at Nyala about 11 A.M. I was thrilled to be in a house again. It was a pleasant brick house with the neatest thatched roof I had seen in the Sudan. Our host had shot a lot of lions, the skins of which were on the floors, and he had some very fine leopard-skins as well. There were two other houses, one belonging to the O.C. troops and the other to a topping man, who was a wonder with all animals.

We all had baths—real ones in a real bath—rested, and then in the evening Bimbashi¹ C. of the Western Arab Corps came to join us in a merry evening, with dinner and champagne, followed by a refreshing sleep which lasted until the boys woke us with morning tea.

I think my diary gives the best impressions of that week's holiday.

"*Sunday, October 28.*—M. has some jolly ponies and lots of chickens and ducks which I fed this evening. The ducks have a lovely cement swimming-

¹ Captain.

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pool of their own which slopes down level with the ground at the ends, so that the ducks can get in and out easily.

"The old north wind is blowing, and it has been blowing hard all day.

"We dined with Bimbashi C., who is a dear person.

"We love staying with M., because he doesn't fuss and is always so amusing.

"*Monday, October 29.*—To-day we watched a grand polo match, M. and Bimbashi C. leading sides of native players, who, by the way, appeared to be extraordinarily good at the game. They are Sudanese officers, awfully well turned out, and their ponies are well groomed and cared for.

"M. is very busy. He goes to the office in the mornings and 'administers justice,' as he insists upon calling it, until about two o'clock. They are working all out in preparation for the Governor-General's visit in November at the time of the horse-shows.

"There are two other officers, who are away from the station doing something or other, but will be back in a day or so.

"*Tuesday, October 30.*—Captain M., the nice man who is a marvel with animals, came in to-day, and we met him at breakfast. He is tall, strong, full of fun, and has lived hard—what he hasn't done isn't worth recording. His experiences range from riding to hounds, fishing, and all that sort of thing at home, to going down the Mississippi river for hundreds and hundreds of miles in a 'dud' motor-

boat to a place he calls Pensacola. He had five dollars with which he intended to buy land, but changed his mind and became a tram-conductor, clipping tickets with a machine that said 'Ding, ding,' until two startled and horrified lady passengers, daughters of the 'old Admiral,' recognized him and insisted upon his ceasing to be a 'dreadful' tram-conductor and becoming something more 'genteel.'

"He is the nicest person imaginable, and is simply mad about animals. We went to see his horses, foals, donkeys, dogs, bush-buck, ducks, geese, chickens, and pigeons, but it got dark and we couldn't see them all properly, so we went on to the veranda of his house and sipped cool drinks. Then we talked some more, and became more entranced with our jolly horse-and-dog-loving host who is so human and whose old jodhpurs and greying hair look so right on him.

"We had a topping little dinner at home with M., and feel more than ever that he must be the man who put 'ho' in host. In his house you may drink all the water you like if you really *don't* want wine. And he found me a cluster of little pink roses—marvellous in this land of sand and heat. He has three dear dogs—one's name is Ben and the other two Mary and Stubble respectively. This last really means 'Stable,' because that is always where he is to be found, and the name the boys gave him.

"*Wednesday, October 31.*—We spent a quiet day—visited the doctor who had been so good to C.T.

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and chatted about things. He is a good man. To-night we met everybody at dinner with M. I was, of course, the only woman present, but that didn't matter much.

"We met a priceless Irish captain who is O.C. armoured cars going through from Fasher and Nyala, *via* Buram and Sibdu, and so to El Obeid, where he is to meet and escort the Governor-General on his visit. He has about twenty armoured cars, and they looked most impressive as they came into Nyala.

"This 'Irish captain' speaks with the loveliest Irish brogue, and also had the honour of crashing in M.'s collapsible chair. He came down sudden and sharp, and of course everybody indulged in hoarse roars of joy. That happened at Bimbashi C.'s little dinner—and, after having had the great honour of crashing in M.'s chair, he stoutly refused to sit on anything but his own queer Hyde Park-looking chair. You know, the little hard slatty green chaps, and everybody told him that they were positive that it actually *had* come originally from Hyde Park one dark and stormy night! But the Irish captain didn't care, and revenged himself by wiping everybody's eye at poker. It was lucky that we were only playing for piastres.

"M.'s chair is famous. Every notable who has ever had the misfortune to park on it has ignominiously crashed. M. is thinking of exhibiting it, because it can hardly be expected to provide space for any more names on the back.

"*Thursday, November 1.*—We got a lot of sweets

from the shop—store I should say—and feel a bit sick in consequence!

“ I went for a lovely ride with the nice man who went to Pensacola. He is letting me have one of his little pony-saddles to take back to Buram.

“ There was another great polo game to-day and we took cine pictures of it, and we all laughed and had lots of fun. Then everybody came here for evening drinks.

“ *Friday, November 2.*—A mail came in to-day. Lots of lovely mail and papers. So everybody has been sunk in a kind of enchanted trance, but we shook ourselves alive to bath and put on our neatest etceteras to go out to dine.

“ I’m feeling rather the worse for wear. Our quiet life at Buram hardly compares with this ‘hearty’ station, where everybody meets each evening. We shall be leaving on Sunday. M. goes down with us, as he has a lot to attend to at the various native villages—seeing chiefs and checking the work on the road. He also goes to Abu Sala, where the Governor-General will shoot the gentle duck.

“ *Saturday, November 3.*—I have been packing to-day, and Captain M. spent the morning with us. He gave me *Tarka the Otter*, and it makes one feel that one must never kill the darlings.

“ We’re photographing the native ‘band’ to-morrow. The chap who plays the ‘flute’ is a marvel. He blows in such a way that only the middle part of his cheeks puff out, and they look

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for all the world as if golf balls were being forced through them.

"The drums are wonders, too; and although there are relays of drummers, and flautists who come and go continuously, not one note or beat is missed—they just go on and on.

"They were told to come down this evening to play for us, and we all collected on the porch while they played. I've never heard such an awfully ripping native *dalluka*.¹

"This *dalluka* is said to be the best in Darfur. It almost drove me mad with excitement, and I wanted to shout and stamp my feet in unison with the players.

"*Sunday, November 4.*—We had an early lunch, left Nyala at about one o'clock, and covered quite a good distance in spite of the sand! My face and hands are burning from the wind and grit. M. is with us, and his car has gone wrong again. This is horrid for him, because he has to be out of his station seeing to things so often.

"We are camping at a native village called Tullus for the night. M. calls it 'Tullus Junction.'

"*Monday, November 5.*—We toured the *rahad*² here this morning for duck. The Governor-General will shoot here.

"There are not so many duck as there were going into Nyala. There are some smart little grass shelters now, and the Governor-General will have a comfortable time.

¹ The word really means 'drum,' but it is used for describing a native dance or band.

² Rain-filled depression.



BENI HELBA GIRLS DANCING AT NYALA



BENI HELBA WOMEN AND 'FERIK,' OR TEMPORARY VILLAGE

“ M. and I saw a snake, which he shot. Good night.

“ *Tuesday, November 6.*—Happy day—though awfully tired. We are camped at Gadad—old Abu Hameira’s camp. All these places are names only. There are no real villages. The people are nomads, and only stay here during the rains. After they are over they usually trek down to the Bahr-el-Arab. The Fellata are very superstitious—and M. says that they won’t take any of their foals to the horse-shows because they are afraid of some *nas*¹ or other putting the evil eye on them.

“ We lose M. to-morrow—he goes to Abu Sala and we to Buram.” .

I shall always cherish the happy memory of that week’s holiday. We arrived back at Buram to find that the camp was perfectly tidy, but that lots of stores had been stolen—eight mixed bottles of drinks included—that our *hamla* had not arrived with our precious film, and that Hassan, the *askari*, accused Bishara of stealing French vermouth which he took up to his (Hassan’s) house as a gift to him. In a great tumult they all accused each other. Adam was distinctly inebriated, and had been all the time we were away, and it was said that he had killed the gazelle and the hawk and, oh! that all kinds of tragedies had happened!

The most serious was that the *hamla* had not arrived, and C.T. went off in the car to M. at Abu Sala to see what *tartib*² could be made to find it.

¹ People.

² Arrangement.

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In the contrariness of things it arrived at Buram with our film and stores at five o'clock that evening—after C.T. had left.

C.T. arrived back in time for dinner, and then we had to let M. know that the *hamla* had come, because he had sent a horseman off—post-haste to Abu Gabra—to try to locate it.

It was all very worrying, but it was nice to see this old camp again; the trip had done us good, and the new grass-roofed shelter was grand.

M. arrived from Abu Sala next morning at eleven o'clock, and pleased we were to see him. We had a wonderful day in every way. M. tried the case relating to the stolen drinks, and found Mohammed guilty of stealing eight bottles, and that young Bishara had aided and abetted him in his awful felony. So they were to go on the morrow. From the welter of accusations and defences the fact emerged that Mohammed had twice been convicted of theft. I've never known such easy liars in my life, and I've met a few, white and black.

The worst of it was that we should be minus two servants. We had an awful lot of amusement out of the 'case.' M. made everything look so terribly funny. I envied him his ready wit. That night we had a great and childish game of cards, and did more laughing than anything else.

M. stayed the night, and left in a cloud of dust at seven o'clock on the following morning—joking up to the last!

We had another excursion to make—one that would combine photography business with a little



AT SIDDU, AT THE TIME OF THE ARAB HORSE-SHOW THERE



LEOPARD WALKING THROUGH THE THICK

relaxation—to Sibdu, where the Rizeigat horse-show was to be held, at which the Governor-General was expected.

I tried out my little new soft saddle on the day before our departure. It was a lovely crystal morning. The air smelt of yellow grass, and the green pigeons and parakeets in the big fig-trees were making up a great song about the wonder of the day. They were very busy eating figs in between whiles, and the skins came tumbling down after they had eaten the juicy seeds inside.

The north wind was puffing gently and softly, bearing the essences of the desert whence it came and the rich warm scents of the miles and miles of grass-lands through which it had swept.

Smoke rose on the horizon from the grass-fires, and the air was like tinkling crystal pellets. You could almost feel the substance of it.

That day we spent packing and getting ready for the journey, and C.T. and Errol overhauled the car and cameras.

CHAPTER XI

THE ARAB HORSE-SHOW

LEAVING Buram at 8.20 A.M., we arrived at Sibdu at 6.30 in the evening, which was quite good going considering the sand.

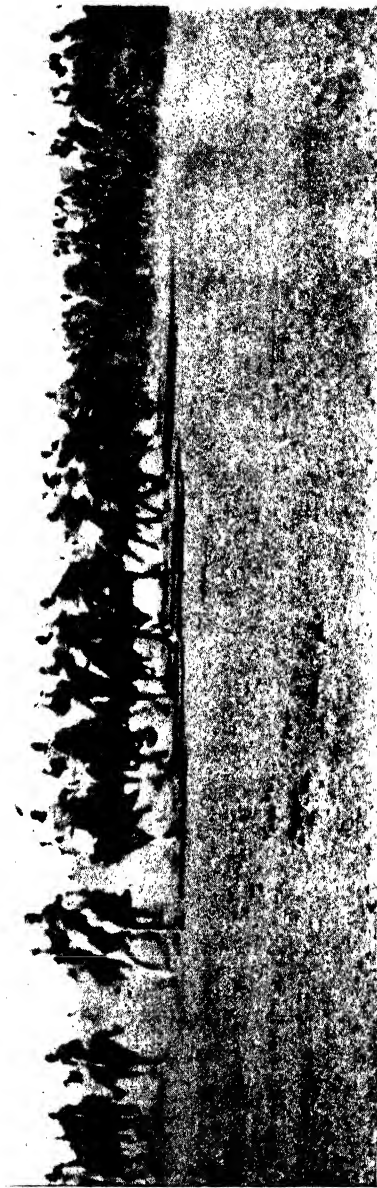
On our arrival we could see Arab tents all over the sand, and fires were twinkling everywhere like fireflies—a thrilling spectacle.

Mr L., the District Commissioner from Kubbe, met us, and we dined with him and were introduced to Ibrahim Musa, the Nazir of the Rizeigat—a very fine-looking man with a great deal of character in his face.

Sibdu is a sandy place, and the great wind from the north blew and blew all day. Mr L. had bestirred himself to prepare the place to receive the guest of honour. Little grass houses all in a line were facing the *rahad* where Mr L. was carefully nursing about two dozen duck and odd teal for the Governor-General when he arrived on the 16th. These little houses were for the people in the Governor-General's train, and the biggest was for his Excellency himself. It also had the distinction of having a high grass wall round it. There was also one for us, an attention which we greatly appreciated.

We walked among the Arab *feriks*¹ and saw

¹ Tents.



ARAB HORSE-SHOW : A RACE



THE RIDE PAST THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE RIZEIGAT ARABS AT THE ARAB HORSE-SHOW

THE ARAB HORSE-SHOW

plenty of things to photograph. The tents, of plaited grass mats, were made over circular frames of sticks. Close by each tent we saw mares and foals tethered, and calves and cows who were chewing the cud. Girls walked about idly, or sat grinding corn on slabs of stone, always with their hair done in plaits, which bobbed on their shoulders. Young men in long white garments, and always carrying a long spear in their hands, proudly rode their best ponies—whose mouths were ruined by the cruel thonged bits—on a bare patch at the side of our little row of houses. They were exercising their horses in preparation for the great day of the race, when the prizes would be given.

Meanwhile there arrived Major A. of the veterinary department—one of the senior officers of the Sudan, and very much loved and respected by everybody, including the Arabs. We talked about hunting, and the 'lone places.' He told us about game at the Shaleika river, and suggested it as the best place for us to take our game pictures—a useful hint.

Our 'house' was a kind of rendezvous, and we spent some jolly hours there. We did a lot of photography, procuring some good pictures.

Incidentally I got what I called "the Sibdu snuffle." Everybody gets it, because of the dust which blows all day long in clouds like face-powder. I liked the wind at Buram, but it isn't really the thing at Sibdu.

Mr L. and the Governor of Darfur Province had been to Abu Gabra to meet the Governor-General,

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and they all arrived back at Sibdu with a large number of armoured cars and people, which much impressed the great throng of Arabs. The next day all the Rizeigat men marched past the Governor-General on their horses—there were three thousand or more, and they made a very impressive sight. Ibrahim Musa, the Nazir, rode in front on a grey horse, wearing his red robe of honour and looking very elegant and dignified. He rules his tribe with a firm hand, and brooks no argument from any of its members.

We all dined at long tables that night, and the candles, shaded with red silk, made everything and everybody look very charming.

The next day we took our leave, for plenty of work awaited us at Buram. The members of the Government party called to see us there at our camp when they passed on the way to Nyala. They all sat under our big new *kornuk*, partaking of the cakes and cool drinks which we offered them. We had put down the carpets, and with the *angareb* cushions and our camp chairs the place looked all ready for them when they came.

That Government trip right down to that remote spot did a world of good to the Arabs, who were duly impressed with everything, especially the armoured cars.

CHAPTER XII

AGAIN MAKING PICTURES

AFTER all the unwonted stir and activity of our visits to Nyala and Sibdu we had much difficulty in rounding up our actors. Some of them had overstayed their leave and remained in their *feriks*, while others simply disappeared until the good Nazir sent men out to find them.

It was getting cool, and the wind kept up. Banks of grey cold clouds in the sky made the strangest sight after the great heat we had had.

We did a great deal of flash-light photography at that time. At night we would hear great bangs and see flashes of light down by the cameras. Quickly we would run down to see what we might see and to reset the cameras. Usually we found hyena spoor at the water-hole, and when the plates were developed we invariably saw pictures of hyenas. They were extremely clear and good as pictures, but what we wanted were pictures of lion and leopard. The trouble was that the hyenas would touch the trip-string connected with the cameras before any other animals came near, and when the cameras were reset the same thing would happen again. It was very annoying.

The grey clouds had the effect of making the weather seem cold, so I dressed Kima in one of his London coats. It was not really cold, but appeared

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so to us with our thinned blood. Kima was as pleased with his coat as he could be, but Old Stinker could not understand it at all and sniffed at it when he came near Kima.

By dint of hard work we quickly got all the people to work again. We were hurrying things on at Buram so that we could get away off the beaten tracks to photograph game. Our little river was drying up rapidly. There were only a couple of pools left, and these, too, soon became mere mud. The north wind was, in fact, drying up the whole country, but the mosquitoes had gone, and for that at least we were thankful.

A leopard had come to drink at the river every night, giving us some hope of being able to photograph him, but we had no luck. We were disappointed, of course, but we were not really concentrating upon big game at Buram: we knew that we should get it farther south.

The picture was making great strides, and we hoped to finish the 'story' part of it by the end of December. We were longing to set off on adventures new.

One curious and rather distressing incident may be recorded here. A baby buffalo which had come into our possession died after we got back from Sibdu. We found that an Arab had torn off its umbilical cord—the possession of which is regarded by them as a great charm against cattle disease, and insures the owner's cows having strong healthy calves to the end of time.

Of course it was hopeless to try to find out who





MAKING A VILLAGE

AGAIN MAKING PICTURES

had actually done this. I don't think these people know what cruelty means.

We were always busy, either working out in the blistering sun or in camp arranging many details that had to be attended to in connexion with the picture.

We were working hard getting the village location set for the second half of the picture—the time when the children are grown up—and we went backward and forward carrying wood and grass into the car for the new huts and *zarebas* that had to be made, because the village was supposed to be about ten years older. And the actors, as usual, were a never-ending trouble. I endeavoured to tie Loweno's bosom-binder in every conceivable way. It was a nuisance having to cover her lovely little breasts—yet they had told us in London that the censor would not pass that sort of thing—strange!

The two grown-up boys, Boru and Nikitu, had to be measured for new *gallabiya*.¹

A Syrian doctor who had been at Sibdu arrived one evening, and amused us with some Syrian stories.

One was about a hyena and a fox. Here it is as near as I can remember it.

The Jackal had had a lean time—there were not many pickings in the small-game line, and the time was just before Easter. He'd had several unsuccessful forays among the ducks and geese and chickens at a certain farmyard, and he was becoming desperate. So he thought and thought, and at last hit

¹ Long white robes.

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upon a plan. He put on his saddest mien, tucked his tail away, and went to see the ducks and geese and chickens.

"Oh, ho," said they, "and why so downcast, Master Jackal? You walk all bent, and your eye is kind."

"Good evening, my dear friends," said young Jackal. "Why, have you not heard? I am started on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the Holy City. It is Holy Week, and I fast."

"So, so!" said the geese and ducks and chickens. "Ah, so, so—come then, among us, and rest the night."

And with a deep sigh of thanksgiving friend Jackal tucked up his tail and closed his eyes—among the geese and ducks and chickens.

He waited and waited until he saw that they were all asleep in a snuggling heap, and then deftly leaped upon and killed and ate the lot. Then, rubbing his tummy with satisfaction, and trimming his whiskers, he settled down to a comfortable night's rest.

But the next night he realized that he had been rash in eating all the geese and ducks and chickens, for there was nothing for him to eat at all in the empty farmyard.

So he sat for a while and scratched his chin and said to himself, "But still it was a good story that I told them about the pilgrimage to Jerusalem," and laughed and laughed as he trotted off. Soon, however, the laugh froze upon his face, for he saw old man Hyena jogging along toward him in the

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moonlight, and, his brain working quickly, he walked with a sober air until old man Hyena came up.

"Good evening, Master Jackal. You look sad," said old man Hyena.

"Good evening, old Hyena Bey. I go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It is Holy Week."

"Oh, so," said old man Hyena, not understanding, but pretending that he did.

They loped along together without saying much for a time, each suspicious of the other, and then suddenly young Jackal had to use all his wits to prevent himself from putting on an excited expression and crying out with joy, for there, not a yard from them, was a grand hunk of meat displayed to its best advantage on a tussock of dry grass. Young Jackal's brain was racing and racing, and while he sat down, as if he did not much care about anything in the world, old man Hyena looked interestedly at the meat. Suspecting a trap, he said: "You are a pilgrim, and going a long way, *you* go and eat the meat."

"Nay, do not tempt me, old Hyena Bey," said Jackal. "I am a pilgrim, I go to Jerusalem, the Holy City, and I must fast until Easter Day. Go *you* and get the meat."

Without more ado the old Hyena, being very greedy, sprang forward and, as his jaws closed on the meat, the farmer's trap closed too—round his legs!

With a howl of pain old man Hyena dropped the meat, which rolled down and down from the tussock of grass.

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Then young Jackal, with all the bounce and wicked vigour of his true self, leaped on to it, and consumed it, slowly and with appreciation. When old man Hyena saw the last juicy morsels disappearing he called out in fury and rage: "Hi, stop! you said that you were fasting until Easter."

"Just so," answered young Jackal, with a loud laugh, as the sun pushed above the horizon. "But Easter is now here!"

I thought that story ought to be dedicated to all the oily, smug-faced, artful hypocrites in the world.

I spent hours searching for an oldish woman who could look the part of the mother as she would appear "ten or fifteen years after"—some one who resembled the woman Fatma, who had originally impersonated the character in her youth, but it was hopeless. Errol and I went to the *suk*, but drew a blank.

It was disappointing, but the work was going beautifully, which consoled us. Boru, the hero, was a treasure, and was already the outstanding personality in the picture. The necessary woman would be discovered somewhere and somehow.

A leopard was caught in one of the traps one night, but unfortunately it escaped. The boys had not put enough thorn branches in the mouth of the trap, because, I presume, they were too lazy. They needed constant watching. That particular incident was especially annoying, because C.T. and Errol had taken turns at sitting up a tree for flash-light pictures, and between them had got some good ones, but they still wanted to photograph a leopard. The

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beast would come close, but never close enough to the cameras.

Some nights later a hyena was caught in a noose-trap, but he also got away. He broke the rope. There seemed to be a hoodoo on the traps.

The leopard was still in the neighbourhood. It had a mate and a cub too. We knew that by the spoor at the water-hole.

At the next *suk* we had another hunt for a woman to play the mother part, but we had no luck. The Nazir thereupon issued an order for all the old women from the outside villages to come in for camera tests! The old Nazir was in a particularly pleasant frame of mind just then because we had presented him with a fine Mappin and Webb teapot, with a sugar-basin and jug of heavy electro-plate.

I had to call Errol to bring a rifle one night. I was in a hut and couldn't get out because there was a leopard snooking about outside.

The nights were getting quite cold and the north wind chillsome in the early dawn.

Mail came to us occasionally, and we received a letter which had been sent from Khartoum in June! Goodness knows where it had been.

C.T. and Errol continued to take turns at sitting up trees at night for flash-pictures.

They got a good set of hyena pictures, one of gazelle, at the water-hole, and a lot of small creatures, but our real game work was to come later.

We planned to go to a place called Kundi to see what kind of neighbourhood it was for our big

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river scene. We heard that the water there was wider than the Bahr-el-Arab. It meant a rough journey, for there was no road—only a rough path.

I looked forward to the jaunt, for the camp smelt worse than a polecat's lair, with all the traps set with ancient slabs of meat all round.

In due course we started off on the road to Kundi, and found the track worse than anything the Arabs had told us about. We left at 7.30 A.M. and arrived at 4.30 P.M., having travelled only about thirty miles.

The track was thickly fringed with thorn-trees and bushes, and you can imagine what it was like being scraped and scratched by thorn branches all day, in a blistering sun; we also had to stop often to cut down over-arching branches.

The ground was all tramped cattle-track, baked hard by the sun. Cattle, to say nothing of elephant, had gone through during the mud season, and their deep spoor had been hardened by months of sun, so that we bumped and crashed all the way.

At Kundi we found a large narrow lake which looked exactly like a river—there were water-lilies and reedy banks. We thought that when the water had gone down, which it would do in a month's time, leaving the grassy sides dry, we might return to get some of the river scenes.

Certainly it did not look altogether unpromising. There were a lot of large trees, and coming in we saw a big flock of about a thousand golden-crested

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cranes. I banged off a musket into the air to make them fly while C.T. and Errol photographed them, but as an offset to this I must say that I had never seen larger mosquitoes than the Kundi variety. They were as big as chocolates!

We intended to leave on the following day and go back through Wadi Riggel, which was also supposed to be a possible river 'location.'

That evening there was a kind of gale blowing, but we had some good duck-shooting. There were thousands of birds—pin-tail and snipe—painted snipe too, and dozens of whistlers.

We had brought Kima and Old Stinker with us, and they sat in front of the big log-fire warming their little blue tummies as usual, with their hands held high above their heads.

The next day found us zigzagging through thick thorn-bush hour after hour, and when we came to Wadi Riggel we found it as dry as the old proverbial bone.

At night, dead beat, we were sitting somewhere in the bush with hyenas and things howling, and the north wind, which had been blowing hard all day, moaning round us. The boys were all talking and laughing round their fire. They were happy because they had as many duck and guinea-fowl as even they could possibly consume. We had seen more guinea-fowl that day than I had ever seen in any one day before. They were in groups all over the country.

We had passed parties of trekking Arabs on our way. The women were carrying gourds of water

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and grain on their heads, while the men rode donkeys or walked, carrying nothing at all.

The men wore white robes in varying stages of dirt or decay, and the women had dark blue cotton cloth swathed round them. Their hair, of course, was done in tiny plaits which came to their shoulders, and they were *all* very dirty indeed. In fact, it was very rarely that we found a clean woman in that part of the country.

We got back to Buram the next day. It was lovely to get into clean clothes again, after being without clean ones on the road. I had come back torn to shreds—we all did. My stockings were a sight not to be missed.

We resumed work on the film, and kept at it hard all day.

Fatma, the 'leading lady,' was a little devil. She was an awfully alive creature, though, and very often knew far more than she pretended to. She liked to show off before the others, and it was then that I felt that I would have liked to spank her. She must have possessed that awful quality the 'stars' call 'temperament'! She and all the others were very trying at times, but after they had roused me to heights of fury I had to smile at them because they were really so childlike.

We did crowd scenes—people assembling in the village to see the elephant-hunters off. They would insist on marching like soldiers, and it was hard work making them do otherwise.

This is the sort of thing that often happened just as we were going to 'shoot'—somebody would





FATMA AND THE BABY GIRAFFE

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come walking into the picture with a cheap walking-stick—something that had found its way right down there from Khartoum! Or another inspired and imaginative idiot would come wearing my old cast-off helmet or something equally grotesque and maddening. We had to watch our actors very closely all the time. Fatma delighted in changing her bangles and rearranging her garments, and even adding some, or taking others off, in between scenes which were supposed to be of the same time and action.

Still, we made some lovely pictures. There were no excitements at that period. It was just work, work at the picture all day, and our only relaxation was provided by the inhabitants of our private zoo.

My diary entries read :

" *Tuesday, December 18.*—The young pet leopard is ill—too much *lacham*,¹ I'm afraid—we've got to watch that animal-boy. Instead of feeding the leopard with small quantities often, he gives him far too much at one sitting, to save himself the trouble of repeating the performance.

" Errol is sitting by the big log-fire massaging the poor animal's tummy, and the leopard growls and groans, while Old Stinker gallops about the place, stopping occasionally perilously close to the leopard, sort of sniffing and clucking at him. The leopard glares at Stinker and decides not to eat him just yet!—and groans instead.

" Adam is becoming a bad man too! He will

¹ Meat.

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drink *marissa*. It's a great camp! and incidentally is awfully pretty at the moment with the firelight playing on the gigantic fig-tree, lighting up its big glossy leaves.

"I wonder if we are going to get any Xmas mail—I do wish somebody would send me some sweets and things.

"*Wednesday, December 19.*—We've been out of quinine a long time and I hope that we shall be able to get some before we go to the Shaleika—we shall need it like anything at Kundi too. Those mosquitoes down there are the devil's own.

"I'm relieved to think that we're all feeling so well after the quinine injections which the Syrian doctor gave us at Sibdu. Errol is a different man.

"The good old N.W. is blowing like fury to-day, and I'm waiting for C.T. and Errol to go down to the village—they are rounding up the 'crowd' who are going to be the 'villagers' trekking, and, later, fleeing from a terrific forest-fire.

"*Thursday, December 20.*—Nothing exciting except that we've made some exceptionally good film to-day of the crowd on trek.

"We've got to watch the principals like a lynx. They will arrange their garments differently, and, as you can guess, if this were not corrected, it would inevitably spoil a sequence. We're all dog-tired.

"*Friday, December 21.*—Same as yesterday, exactly, with the added event of the death of the little leopard. This is too sad for anything. He was such a darling and a perfect beauty. He had

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been ill for some days. We, of course, did all we could for him, but it wasn't any use.

"We are going on a Christmas holiday trek in a day or two.

"*Saturday, December 22.*—Bishara is out of gaol and at large again. He is a good kid really. So we shall take him on again.

"*Sunday, December 23.*—Travelled to a place called Allahada.

"We had some magnificent luck on the way, for we came on two Arabs on horseback who were riding down a hyena. We got some cine pictures of the chase before they speared him. Mr L. from Kubbe joined us at Buram and went with us on the old lorry.

"*Monday, December 24.*—Camping here for Xmas. Good guinea-fowl shooting, but I got my legs torn going through *shoke*¹ after them. Six of us have all met here for Xmas. Everybody has travelled over large chunks of the map to get here—a grand meeting.

"*December 25.*—Christmas Day and a plum-pudding. And everybody happy and full of good cheer."

We decided to return to Buram and not to go on to Kundi, as the game and grass were not right yet. Moreover, we were anxious to complete our work on the Buram locations so that we might get off into the farthest places.

We went to look at Abu Sala to see if it were

¹ Thorny prickly shrub.

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suitable for a river location, but it was too obviously a lake, and duck were there in millions. We got some good shooting.

Coming back, we saw animal eyes reflected in the spot-lights' beams—eyes everywhere, in trees and on the ground. Those in the trees belonged to night-apes. For such tiny creatures they possess astonishingly large eyes, which shone red when the car's lights picked them up—just like distant camp fires.

We lost C.T. for a while—he had to go suddenly to Nyala—and Errol and I went on with the picture. It was a worrying job. The way the actors went off in the middle of work was maddening. We had to send to outlying villages to retrieve them. We would photograph, perhaps, a bunch of hunters, and when we looked for them to continue the sequence the next day they had gone, in spite of warnings, threats, and fines. We put one of the Nazir's head men in charge, to round them up and keep them together, and all he did was to allow people to go, and then, quite childishly, substitute others, swearing by Allah that they were the same men and women! When we called their names on the roll there came a deathly silence. It was awful. The picture could have been made much more quickly if this kind of thing had not continually happened. It held up the action. One can't photograph a scene which follows on the heels of another with only half the people who were in the first.

However, things were not always too bad. We

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plugged along, and I directed a sequence of the hero and heroine in a little arbour, a little love scene, which promised to look glorious on the screen.

We did drought pictures, for the heat was coming back in full violence, and the north wind hardly blew at all.

One day Errol and I did twenty-seven scenes in all, and were immensely pleased with things. It was a great record, and a day when all things went well.

The diary kept us straight as regards the passing of time, and its dates furnished dramatic surprises. For instance, I wrote:

“ *Tuesday, January 1, 1929.*—I can’t believe it !

“ We didn’t know, or, I should say, realize it, until this same blessed day—New Year! God help us all!

“ We’ve had a good day—lots of good work, but I feel a bit fussed and done in.

“ You see, Kima bit my finger—good night.

“ *Wednesday, January 2.*—We have been working like slaves at the film. It is hard work in the boiling sun trying to get people to do what you want—our ‘leading lady’ has really developed a temperament now, and is awfully difficult to manage.

“ The sand is so fine, and grey with burnt grass ash that has blown in now, and it is inches deep. We have to plunge straight into our tiny baths when we’ve finished work.

“ *Thursday, January 3.*—Errol and I rode early this morning, and then did some work on the bare,

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treeless plain—the heat—well, if you've imagination use it now. And the crowd was more than usually stupid—we worked from 9 to 1.30, then did some easier stuff in the village.

“C.T. is back after sending his telegrams at Nyala.

“*Friday, January 11.*—Fatma, the leading lady with the temperament, is becoming a bother. She *will* swathe her head and shoulders up in her *tob*,¹ unless I, almost sobbing with exhaustion, cajole her to remove it. I can't scold her too much; otherwise she'd go and complain that she was badly treated. When you see that little girl on the screen, diary, you'll think to yourself, 'Yes, my beauty, you're awfully sweet and graceful, aren't you? But do you remember what a little devil you were when you didn't feel like working, and the trouble you caused, the waste of time and general fussation before you relented and consented to smile and remove your beastly smothering veil?' And yet she is very fascinating, and I must laugh at her sometimes.

“The country for some time has been unsettled. There was uneasiness about the Nuers. Now they've broken loose and have been slaughtering some Homr.

“The Rizeigat up Muglad way and the Homrs who join their boundary have been fighting for some water-holes, and there are a good many killed. The Sudan defence force is sending soldiers down to try to stop the row.

¹ Head veil.

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"*Saturday, January 12.*—It is amusing to think that a small war has started, north-east, so close to us. I hope it doesn't spread. I'm not too keen on infuriated Arab gentlemen running wild.

"*Sunday, January 13.*—We trekked about most of the day trying to get some hartebeest—we've got to have a lot of meat for scenes of hunters returning from a hunt—but we didn't see a single one—only small gazelle. It will be a big weight off my mind when we get those night firelight shots done.

"*Monday, January 14.*—There was a commotion here to-day when a lion came to the water-hole to drink. He chased some cattle from the water, had a drink, and then cleared off into the bush. He is obviously trekking.

"I wish we had been there with the cameras. But it all happened very suddenly.

"I'm tired. We took the big firelight scenes in the villages, using magnesium flares beneath a built-up log-fire; photographed a big circle of people with others moving about round them; and scenes of interest between the hero and heroine.

"I hope these pictures will look as well on the screen as they did to the eye. We have only the forest-fire sequence to do and the river one also, then we shall be free to go south to the game country.

"The dust is ankle deep in this part of the world now, and when the wind blows!

"*Wednesday, January 16.*—Much photography to-day—we did the people in the forest, asleep—

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moonlight—then dawn, and the sudden awakening and pandemonium when they realize that a great forest-fire has caught them. The ‘long shots,’ ‘middle shots,’ and ‘close ups’ this sequence needed can be imagined. We shall continue to-morrow. I think we’ve done a good day’s work.

“Kima and Old Stinker acted awfully convincingly!

“We are now all sitting round our camp fire, and the monkeys are near, tied to a log.

“*Friday, January 18.*—Captain B. and Bimbashi C. arrived here to-day with their Sudanese troops, and are camped quite close. They came and sat round our camp fire and had dinner with us, and we thought it was simply lovely to see them. They are keeping their eyes open for wars and rumours of wars down here, I suppose. We have heard no more about the Rizeigat and Homr affairs. I do hope there won’t be any upheavals in any of the bits of country in which we have yet to work.

“*Sunday, January 20.*—Our two friends and their troops moved off toward the Bahr-el-Arab—about 100 miles away from here.

“We’ve had a successful day, though a trying one. This morning—after preparing a huge fire round a certain bit of forest—which we meant to burn while Boru runs through the flames—we found the stuff would not flare successfully, so we had to find another bit that would do and start all over again.

“Boru acted magnificently, even getting burnt in

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the ordeal, and it ought to be a grand and exciting picture.

“ *Monday, January 21.*—C.T. went off in the unloaded car to look for a place in which to take the big fire and river shots. He will with luck find them somewhere, but I think we shall have to go to the Bahr-el-Arab for them.

“ Errol and I will try to find a spot good enough for the dramatic scene in which a tree crashes on and kills old Asga the sheikh.

“ I bought some leather cushions yesterday—these Arabs have copied the west coast leatherwork, but with what a difference! They don't take the same care as the Nigerians do, and consequently their work is very inferior.

“ *Tuesday, January 22.*—Errol and I rode round this evening to look for a patch of good thick forest trees. We rode through the loveliest scent of mimosa blossom. All the thorn-trees are full of yellow bloom, and the air aches with their perfume.

“ There are some big trees round the camp that are bursting into great bunches of mauve blossom rather like wistaria, only more poignantly scented. The loveliness of one tree in full bloom is beyond words.

“ We saw a mother gazelle and baby only about ten yards away from our horses as we passed. When they saw us they scuttled away into the thorn scrub.

“ But the game has gone. I expect we shall see it down by the Bahr. All the water-holes round here, or most of them, are dry.

“ Two darling baby owls, silver and golden-

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brown, with big, fluffy, feathery bits where their eyes peep and blink, were brought to us in a basket-work cage. I hope they will live and get tame.

" Goodness knows how I'm going to get my ivory articles back to England, because the authorities are trying to stop the Arabs killing female elephants, and to prevent people buying ivory they are putting a ban on any cow ivory leaving the Sudan. This is hard, but we'll see.

" There are heaps of little grey monkeys in the woods, and it puzzles me to know where they drink. Perhaps they don't drink at all, but slake their thirst with the sour aradeiba pods.

" There are masses of different kinds of berries and things for them to eat.

" Old Adolph is a pleasing cockerel. He is crowing now most manfully. He is unusual in everything.

" The green pigeons in the big tree are awfully busy and gay this evening. Sometimes I hear the note of a dove as it settles down more comfortably on its branch, and topping all the other sounds are little shrill shrieks from the tiny green parakeets. They are shy creatures, and I have only seen swift flashes of them.

" I wonder when next we shall have letters from home.

" It is rather cold to-night for a happy change. C.T.'s not back yet, and we're at a standstill now until he brings back the two principals whom he took with him.

" There are lots of lizards in the grass room. They run all about the place catching ants which march

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along the floor like soldiers. Big warrior-ants they are, that nip big lumps out of you if you happen to be unlucky enough to slip in among them. There is a big, fat stumpy-tailed lizard making loud sucking and squelchy noises as he gobbles the ants. I believe you could tame the thing. He is as intelligent as a cat. Not a bit nervous of anyone either. Queer beast.

“*Saturday, January 26.*—C.T. is back—he went as far as the Bahr-el-Arab—and he tells me that the trees at the river are big ones, so we’re packing up and are leaving this old bare camp of ours, and shall only stay here long enough on our return to pick up our heavy kit before going back home. Hurrray! hurrray!! hurrray!!!

“I had my first taste this season of honey in the comb. C.T. brought some back from the Bahr. It was golden and heavenly to bite into.

“*Sunday, January 27.*—All our kit is spread out over the sand, being packed and sorted. We are taking very little with us, and the rest stays here. We are sending the stuff we shall need straight on to a place near the Shaleika, by bull *hamla*, and are travelling ‘light’ to the Bahr.

“*Monday, January 28.*—The mauve acacia-trees are all coming out in blossom to bid us farewell. The scent is divine. We are rather tired to-night after getting everything packed for a final move. We leave at dawn for the big adventure. This trip means danger, hardship, and success or failure, and we are ready, with our belts tightened up another hole!

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“ Good night, diary. It’s the last night under the big fig-tree, with its little green parakeets and pigeons.

“ Good night, Buram, with your sand and sweet-smelling trees, your smiles and your tears and your loneliness, your work, your joys, and your moments of boredom. Good night.”

CHAPTER XIII

THE CAMP OF DREAMS

THE Bahr-el-Arab again; the ever-new Bahr-el-Arab! This was the third time I had seen it and the third different place.

We arrived just as the sun was setting, and the scent, and the grey and crystal and green of the air and trees, made my senses dance with pure joy. Then when the fires were lit I had, too, the added joy of smelling wood-smoke rising in spicy puffs of grey.

Kima and Old Stinker were entranced, refused to go to sleep, and did not seem to mind the distant roaring of lions.

Morning revealed new delights. Tall and branchy trees surrounded us, some bare and others green—I loved the bare ones as much as the green ones. I loved their shapes and the murmur of their branches drily rustling in the wind.

Enchanted and enchanting woods! The air was the colour of blue doves and crystal, and always the baboons barked and little grey monkeys peered down from among leafy branches. Birds sang and chattered all day. When they were silent at evening bats in the great sprawling branches overhead made musical sounds. I did not know before that bats ever made anything else than squeaky noises. But these had notes, musical notes—only a few 'tis

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true, but bewitching, like notes from a wood-wind instrument.

Some of the branches above our heads were big white bare ones, with millions of spreading arms and fingers; others were smooth, with big shiny leaves, green in the daylight, but black against the star-sprinkled sky. Lions roared at intervals.

The river! We were camped on its bank, and underfoot were dry crackly leaves. The stream at that place was quite wide, and where the water had gone down great flat rocks were exposed, on which we could sit and swing our legs.

The banks were crowded with all the loveliest green trees, and we used to watch baboons come to drink as the sun went down.

C.T. and Errol went off with some Arabs with spears, to photograph a lion—a lion which had been round the camp at night—the lioness had not been seen. One of the Arabs had espied the male asleep under a tree, so this hunt had been hastily arranged, in case he went away, for we wanted a picture of Arabs spearing a lion.

I could not go because I was ill, but I comforted myself by thinking of all the lions I should see at the Shaleika.

The hunters returned at lunch-time, however, having had no luck. They saw the lion in long grass and bush about ten yards away from them and did not shoot, of course, as they wanted to get a picture of the men spearing him—but the lion simply sprang past them, and although they followed him they did not see him again.



A REAL LOG-FIRE



THE CAMP OF DREAMS

Errol went off again with the old hunter and a couple of others at five o'clock, and got back for dinner, the glorious slayer of two lions—male and female.

Their kill—a gazelle, the inside of which they had neatly buried under sand and leaves, as is the lion's custom before eating—was found under a tree. A hind leg had been eaten, and it was obvious to Errol that the lions were coming back. At that moment he was lucky enough to see one coming down a footpath with long grass and bushes on either side. He drew a deep breath and shot him. The lioness had not made herself visible, but when she heard the bang of Errol's rifle she sprang into view from the side of an ant-hill. She began to come toward him, then stopped dead in her tracks and stared at him, obviously fussed and puzzled. He fired again and shot her. Both, on receiving the shots, ran into long grass, and, as it was getting dark, the old hunter's advice was to leave them until the next morning. At dawn they would try to recover them, and hoped that the bodies would not in the meantime be eaten by hyenas.

It had been a successful day, but it was a pity that Errol had been prevented from photographing those lions because of the long obscuring grass. After all, it's no use wasting film on a mere flash of the top of a lion's back.

Errol went out the following morning, but could find no trace of them, and it was not until long afterward that their remains were found by an Arab.

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We resumed the filming of incidents in the story. A place had been prepared for the big scene when the fire would overtake the people on the bank of the river.

While waiting, the Arabs had been catching fish in the sandy pools in the dried river-bed which the water had left when it receded. The little fish nestled in hundreds in damp sand-holes, and the Arabs scooped them up in their calabashes.

They were all as happy as puppies; they loved being at the river. There was a whole family playing in the sand, rolling each other about, the old grey-bearded father included. It was very pastoral and sweet to watch.

We fished from the rocks, and C.T. caught a monster mud-fish, a very ugly, flat-headed, and bearded beast. Nurra, the dear old woman who played the mother in the picture, had been working hard digging up the little silver-grey fish in her calabash the whole afternoon, so C.T. gave her his big one. She was delighted, and her family had it for dinner, and she dried her own little silver ones the next day in the sun, and afterward over some wood-smoke, to preserve them.

The beauty of the woods and the fresh earthy perfume of them were an unending and ecstatic delight to me. The mornings until ten o'clock were cool, and the trees and dry leaves on the ground crooned little songs to each other as the soft breeze stirred them.

C.T. and Errol would be talking about lions, while I tried to learn how to do Arab leather-work,

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but there was no one with us who knew the art, so I just copied the work on the red leather cushion I had. It was fascinating. I dyed some leather with native dyes, and the result was very good. You can get quite interesting colours and shades by mixing their three colours of green, orange, and purple, or by adding more or less water.

All the servants were talking happily round their fires, about lions, I expect, because we heard them imitating their roars every night. It was one of the rare camps about which you dream, but do not always find.

We dragged the river for fish with the large net we had brought with us from England, but they were so small that numbers of them got away through the mesh, much to the disappointment of everybody.

We spent difficult days getting the people into the river, and some of them were afraid of the fire which blazed all around them in some of the scenes we photographed. That great forest-fire was a grand sight, and there were many dangerous shots taken.

Soon we had finished off our crowd scenes of the river-crossing, of the fire, and also of the building of the new village; and we linked up some odd bits and 'close-ups,' such as Kima and Old Stinker swimming across the river. We had finished with Fatma, the 'leading lady,' and Nurra, and we continued to photograph flames and burning forest.

We were heartily glad when we had finished all

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the crowd scenes, for our nerves and tempers were strenuously tried.

Boru and Nikitu had pleased us with some fine work in the blazing-forest scenes. They had been slightly burnt, but were very cheerful and proud of their efforts. Boru, particularly, prided himself on being good in his part.

But in spite of the airs and graces and temperament of our 'stars' we could never forget that we were working in a 'studio' in the wilds. Baboons barked in the evenings when they came down to drink, and, in spite of a big log-fire, came quite close into camp—we could see them sitting in the trees peering at us, and very interested in Kima and the little one.

I heard a rustling in some leaves under a tree one afternoon, and idly wondered what it was. When it was repeated I looked down and saw a huge black mamba—the biggest I've ever seen—slither along on the ground near me. C.T. and Errol were there, and C.T. called out for a shotgun, but by the time it arrived the mamba had hidden himself either on the black branches of the tree or under the dry leaves on the ground.

We hunted, but could not see him. I knew that he was still there somewhere, because I heard him rustle again.

It was an interesting camp, for every night we heard the most exciting noises. Lions always roared. Sometimes they were near and sometimes distant. I was always glad to see the fire alight, when lions were so close. The camp-boys used to make a great

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blazing log-fire, which invariably burnt down or died right out at about midnight, and it was about 4 A.M. that we needed it most to scare inquisitive lions.

We bathed in the river, but were not quite sure about crocodiles. We were practically certain, though, that there were none, because Juma Harba, the old Arab, said that he had not seen any just there. He added that if there were any they would only be little ones!

There were oyster-shells lying about everywhere on the sand-banks. I do not suppose they were edible oysters, though.

I believe it has often been remarked that "all nice things come to an end," and an end came to that lovely camp. We had to pack up and journey to the Shaleika—"unmapped, unsurveyed, and uninhabited country"—and we knew that it would be hard going.

We had been getting our kit together all one late afternoon, but managed a heavenly last bathe in which our monkeys joined. Kima swam like an otter, partly under water, and sometimes with his head out of water. Old Stinker swam under, and we had to grab him by the tail to bring him up for a breather, because we were afraid he'd drown. Kima jumped on to Errol's shoulder when he got tired of swimming. It was our last bathe at that place, which I called "the Camp of Dreams."

CHAPTER XIV

THE SHALEIKA

DEAD beat! Bump, crash, bang!—all day. Dry grass, burnt grass, holes, branches, thorns! Ye gods!”

That was what the diary said about that first day.

We had travelled since early morn, and had reached and made camp on the high bank of the Shaleika, but we had not come to the end of our troubles. Oh no. We had days and days more of such journeyings to do before we should reach the place which we intended to make our base.

We had seen a good deal of buck that day, who eyed us with interest, but without alarm, from their shady shelters among the trees.

Errol shot a ram hartebeest, the biggest I had ever seen. The horns, we believed, might prove to be a record. We also bagged two gazelles, and the boys, of whom we had several with us—hunters, guides, and camp-boys—sat up the whole night gorging themselves with all this great quantity of meat. There were lions, too, round the camp that night. They roared and grunted within a mile of us.

Soon after dawn we pushed on.

Picture a desolation of burnt grass; a lot of straight trees with green tops dotted about; a hot sun shining down on a crashed motor-lorry; lots of grimy people padding about; and you will see





HARTEBEESTE

THE SHALEIKA

us in our next 'situation.' Elephant-tracks were the cause of it; the country was torn up with their pot-holes. We had crashed in and out of them until ten o'clock that blithesome morn, and then a deep one, hidden in an unburnt tussock of grass, ruined us. The lorry plunged into it with her front wheels, and bent the front axle, and my left shin.

After the great jar we all tumbled out to look at the damage—and simply said one word to the boys —“Camp!”

Errol and C.T. worked hard all day straightening the axle and dumb-iron between the fork of a tree, using the block and tackle to provide pulling power. The old Cape-to-Cairo days were repeating themselves.

The burnt grass and the heat were unbelievable, and, to make matters even more difficult, the boys were very stupid after their meat orgy. Having stayed awake, talking and boasting all night, they were almost useless. It is a quaint and extraordinary thing that poor men, without a cow in the world, will brag of their great herds, and, lying valiantly, will tell what brave hunters they are, at these feasts.

This foolishness had repeatedly come to our notice, and the boys had always laughingly confessed their greed the next morning. They say that much meat makes them *shedid*.¹

On this occasion they discounted our complaints and reproaches by saying, with superstitious solemnity, that we had brought the mishap upon ourselves by our own boasting!

¹ Strong.

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They said that it is awfully unlucky to remark favourably on anything. For instance, one does not say, "What a fine strong man your son is!" in case a dreadful palsy descends upon him. It was indeed unfortunate, they declared, that the *Sartel Bey* had praised the lorry, bragging that "The old bus was a wonder—getting anywhere and over everything." Just see what had happened! Occult powers had been offended!

To add to our worries poor Kasim had very severe fever, and his temperature rose to 105°. I gave him all the quinine we had. Aspirin only was left in our medical stores, and that was not potent enough, so I felt very perturbed about the lad.

The water of the Shaleika pools was very brackish, and we all suffered distinct thirst because of it. On some occasions we were short of even this kind of fluid—we usually had enough to drink, but we dared not wash until we had found further supplies.

We saw buffalo spoor—oldish spoor—and the country looked good for game. I was almost sorry that I could not work up much interest in shooting, but the truth is that I am not keen on it. I found, by the few shots that I had, that I had not gone off very much, which pleased and contented me, for it was rather important to preserve one's skill with a rifle in a country where one never knew when one would have to shoot quickly.

By dint of hard work C.T. and Errol got the car going by about ten o'clock the next morning, and we started off again. It was a repetition of the previous day as regards bumps. It cannot be

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imagined how bad the ground was to cross in a car. Elephants in the rains had simply made hard puddings of it. We got out of bad, bad bits on to smoothish ground every now and again. Then after a mile or less we would have more of the worse variety again.

Thousands of scraggy trees, all bursting with young green leaves—long, shiny, tender green leaves—dotted the country. They made me think of the cheap glass brooches one sees shaped like bunches of grapes.

Buck appeared in herds, and we thought that with luck we should get the pictures we wanted. To shoot them would be like shooting rabbits, and no sport at all. They were very good specimens, and were in good condition indeed.

C.T. and Errol with the Sinclair cameras were able once or twice to take pictures of hartebeest successfully, but lions were shy in the daytime. We did not see any roaming about, or even sleeping under trees just there.

As the car crawled along a wart-hog ran out of some bushes, stopped dead in front of it with a surprised look on his face, and Errol potted him while he was still thinking.

Of course there was no road of any kind—without our guide, who zigzagged us in and out and round about, it would have been impossible to have got along at all. He followed a shadowy path which had been made by our own *hamla* when it passed some days before, but although it was wider it was hardly as clearly defined as the innumerable game-

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paths. How he recognized it we could not think. It was true that the *hamla* had chopped branches down here and there, but we could hardly have found the way by those signs.

We camped at the river again at a point which we picked up just before sunset. The water had all gone except for small pools here and there at the sides of the sandy bed.

There were some fine water-buck, and we noticed a good many lone bulls. We saw a mother wart-hog with two youngsters, and for a moment I thought she was a lion, as she was down a slope and seemed huge.

The boys were all very happy with lots of meat once more.

Kasim was better, but he had been dangerously ill. I began to wonder what we should do if any others of us got fever, because of the complete lack of quinine.

The following day saw us being roasted on a burnt-grass plain, mending the pipe connecting the engine and radiator, which had burst. It was an alarming incident, because the noise it made sounded as if the lorry had blown up. The shock of the explosion sent me out of the car on to the burnt grass like a bullet out of a rifle. Again we had to improvise a remedy. We used the wet skin of Errol's wart-hog, binding it tightly round the leaking pipe and sewing it up with string after punching holes through it with my manicure scissors!

Then we bumped on again. We saw heaps of



ON THE SANDY BEACH OF THE CHATEAU D'ARRE



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game—water-buck, reed-buck, hartebeest, and wild pig. Errol, springing out of the car several times, photographed buck which were not more than twenty to forty yards away.

Finally we reached our objective, the spot where we had planned to make our base camp, a little way from the river-banks. We had come to a part of the Sudan which no other white man or woman had ever visited before, except Major Audas, who had advised us to explore it. It was virgin country and quite uninhabited, except when a few Mandala penetrated thus far in search of honey. The Mandala Jebels were within sight, and we promised ourselves that we would climb one or two of them and take panorama views of the surrounding country.

Old Juma Harba told us that the *dahl*¹ where herds of buffalo and elephant came to drink was not far off, so we planned to make 'hides'² there and wait for them to come.

The trees and bush in all that country were of every variety imaginable: some tall and slender, others short and fat. There were great overgrown-looking, glossy-leafed bushes, and many white-barked spready-branched trees, which, although not shady, were extremely graceful.

The ground was mostly covered with long yellow grass, but was bare in places and sprinkled over with a bracken-leaf brown carpet of tiny dry leaves.

¹ Water-hole.

² Structures of grass or branches or anything which resembles natural objects in its vicinity.

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There were thousands of birds—hoopoes and jays, and specimens of the whole finch tribe in gay gowns of red and yellow and blue.

All day long a golden mist swathed the landscape with a hot kind of gauzy veil which hung over everything. Our Arab guide told us that this was the mist that made the young green grasses shoot up from beneath the burnt herbage. I could not believe that anything would be induced to grow by a hot haze.

Old Juma Harba said that lions were more plentiful down there than in most places, and, as it was deemed necessary, we built a big *zareba* round our beds.

After a day's stay we moved camp farther back, because we thought that we were too near the water-holes, and feared that the game would be scared off if we were found near the drinking-places. The new camp was in a vile spot; the trees were scraggy, and there was not much shade. A grass shelter was built over our suffering heads. The *zareba* was, of course, quite inadequate; anything could have stepped over it, and if lions came I knew they would smile at it. It was made of a few ordinary branches, not even thorn ones, but the Arabs thought it looked pretty!

The next day proved to be a happy and hopeful one.

We started off at dawn, and walked for miles over rough, trampled-up burnt-grass country. The unburnt grass stood in patches about twenty yards in diameter, and it was at least seven feet high—

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coarse, yellow grass, with heavy stems almost as thick as sticks.

Old Juma Harba went ahead, carrying his long spear and walking with a quick, easy stride. He was an old man, but he seemed to be able to cover ground more easily and more quickly than anyone I have ever known.

There were game-tracks everywhere, and after some hard going he brought us to Dahl Idam and showed us deep fresh spoor of buffalo in the mud round the tree-fringed water-hole whose sloping sides were covered with short green grass. All down the *dahl* grass was shooting above the shallow water.

He pointed to some shady trees to the side, and said confidently that at about two o'clock in the afternoon lion would be found asleep under them. On we went and came to another small *dahl* and water-holes. Round these there were no trees, just young green grass-shoots growing out of the burnt-grass ashes. Farther back there was long yellow grass, and again old Juma Harba explained the signs. He said that when the buck came to drink, between two o'clock and four, the lions hidden in the coarse yellow growths would spring upon the unlucky creatures feeding on the young juicy shoots fringing the water-hole. This water-hole, he declared, would be a good one for game, because it was in the open, and the buck would feel safer there, being able to see farther, and suspecting no danger from the clump of yellow grass a little beyond the clearing. We determined to make a

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'hide' close by, and also at another spot, rather like it, at the buffalo drinking-hole.

Returning to camp, we saw more encouraging signs and felt correspondingly elated. Fresh elephant spoor was visible in the sandy bed of the dry Shaleika river! It was the first fresh elephant spoor we had seen on the trip. Moreover, there was lion spoor all over the place. It is a pity one so seldom sees lions in the daytime; that is why they are such difficult animals to photograph.

A white bone was lying on the blackened ground. I went up to examine it and, to my surprise, found that it was the lower jaw-bone of a young elephant. All the teeth were not visible; but I could see some of them peeping through the opening of the bone. We brought it back to camp, and it terrified Old Stinker! To comfort him I gave him a bath in water already used by C.T., but as there was only a very little, and none for rinsing, Old Stinker's fur did not look as beautiful as it might have done.

Mentally I began to taste champagne in anticipation! We had two bottles, and there had been times, when we were tired, when we felt very much inclined to open them. We contrived to overcome the almost irresistible temptation only by reminding ourselves that they were being saved for a celebration after we had got good elephant-pictures! The signs had been so encouraging that with my mind's ear I could hear those corks popping!

The boys were not thinking of drink, but of meat,

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and since they were, according to their own account, in a state of complete starvation, Errol went back on the lorry's tracks two hours' march away, so as not to frighten the game close by, and shot some buck for them.

Such careful precautions, however, seemed likely to be rendered useless. Clouds had been tumbling about the sky all day, and they looked strangely like rain-clouds, but we could not believe that we were going to have rain in February. We supposed that the Mandala Jebels, which were visible, might attract a few early showers, and we were not elated at the prospect. It would mean that the small outlying water-holes would fill up, and the game would not congregate in one spot. We hoped that the wind would change again to the north, and that there would be no rain, so that the pools would dry up, and all the game, big and small, would have to come to the big *dahls* near us for water. Juma Harba said that that was what he expected would happen, and we felt relieved, because we seldom found him wrong.

But he was wrong for once, because it did rain! Not much, it is true, but enough to send every one running about to bring the kit under shelter.

I remember waking up that morning and informing the world at large that I could smell rain in the air. Everybody looked pityingly at me, and Errol significantly touched his head. The rain took the whole day to determine whether it would fall or not, and in the evening it decided that it would. We could only hope that the outlying water-holes

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would not fill and the game scatter all over the country.

We made the discovery, by our position and observations, that it was possible that the curve of the Shaleika as shown on the map was wrong. Instead of a small curve there was a huge one many miles in length.

The building of the 'hides' was our first job, and C.T. had almost got one finished. Much thought went to their construction. Hassan said that the hole must be roofed over very strongly, because those local lions did not know man, and that if they walked on the roof and smelled him inside they would mistake him for a tetal and eat him in a minute! Another argument in favour of a strong roof was that buffalo, being heavy creatures, might fall through on to our heads.

The weather remained hot while the clouds were working up for rain. All I hoped was that we should get our game-pictures *soon, soon, soon!* It was a peculiarity of our situation that the wind usually sprang up during the night. We had more than once to call to the boys to pour water on the camp fire because of the sparks that flew. Had the grass roof above the cameras and film gone up in flames, or had the car caught fire, our position would have been somewhat difficult, to say the least.

Night, too, at that time would often bring a few flashes of lightning and distant rumblings of thunder, and then down would come the rain, not heavily, but sufficient to make us move our beds into the shelter.



TRAVELING WITH CAMPBELL AND OTHERS IN THE MOUNTAINS OF CALIFORNIA



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There came a Sunday, a breathless and cloudy day, when the first hide being ready for occupation, C.T. went off to it.

Errol was busy fixing up the flash-light apparatus. I sat down to try to write, but abandoned the task as too depressing a business. Thank goodness, I rejoiced, to-morrow we should be able to get on with the work we had come to do.

CHAPTER XV

PHOTOGRAPHING GAME

HELPING to do that work, I spent whole days in underground hides, built on the side of tree-fringed water-holes where buffaloes and other animals came to drink. The first time I went down into one Errol was my companion. We were covered in with a roof of logs strapped together and plastered over with mud. The boys strewed the top with grass to make it look natural and left us, while C.T. went on to superintend the building of other hides at other water-holes.

Errol had his camera facing the drinking-pool, and we sat squeezed on either side of it all day until the sun set.

The most awful sensation I had had for a long time was mine at the first minute of entering, when we were sealed up in the hole. It was about six feet deep and five feet in diameter. I have always had a horror of being buried alive, and sometimes in a nightmare I have felt myself enclosed in the heart of an underground rock. I do not think you can even fancy how my imagination ran riot during that first minute in that dark, clammy hole. I felt rather sick and asked Errol for a cigarette, but he, astounded, said "Smoke? We can't smoke here." I swallowed hard and felt better. We soon became accustomed to the gloom and dampness, and in

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spite of my looking occasionally to assure myself that no snakes were crawling in, I began to be interested in all the queer sounds coming to us from outside.

We were not lucky—I did not see anything that day except birds, but Errol spotted, at a place I could not see from my perch, some hartebeest going up to the higher part of the *dahl* to drink.

We got through the long day's watching by eating some slabs of dry bread and canned peaches and glancing at an old magazine, and I was glad to get out when the time came to stretch my cramped legs.

Then we straggled home in the dusk, through long grass and over the sandy river-bed. I did not very much like trekking about at dusk or dark in that 'liony' country, but I got used to it.

The next day I went with C.T. and the boys to make hides resembling big ant-hills. Holes were dug in the ground, over which were fitted frameworks of sticks covered with clay to resemble mounds. We finished one, and it looked exactly like a real ant-hill, but there were steps going down into it, and over the opening was a lid covered with clay and burnt grass. We thought the whole thing looked very cunning and convincing.

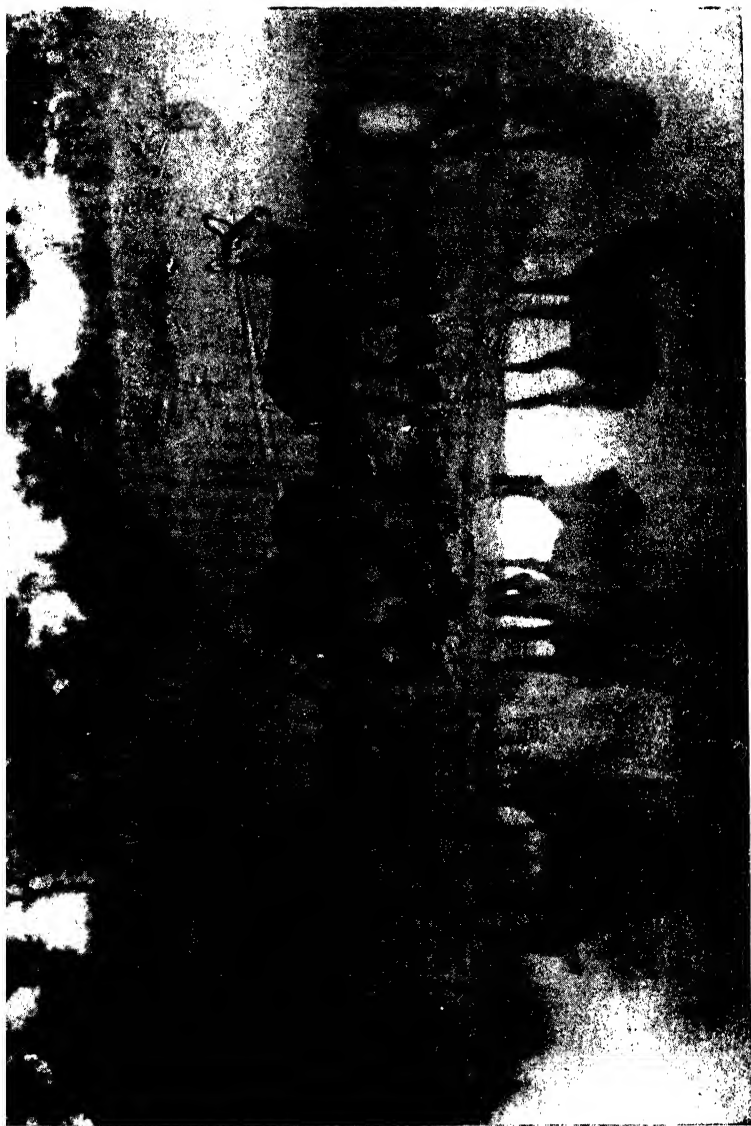
I was outside, sitting, and trying to keep in the tiny patches of shade thrown by the almost leafless branches of a tree growing on the edge of the water-hole (the *only* tree there), when I almost swooned with shock. Hassan's old donkey was feeding on the young grass just in the hollow at my feet, when,

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quite suddenly, without warning, he emitted a kind of squealing pant, and bolted. It all happened in a flash. He had seen a lion, of course. I started up and flew off for my rifle, which (everybody was so careless about rifles—we never thought that we should need one) I had left about ten yards away. We did not see that lion, however, only his tracks near the *dahl*.

During the whole day tetal (*hartebeest*) grazed about fifty yards away—quite unafraid, although they waited until about five o'clock to come down to drink. I noticed that they did not all drink together. Some stood on the higher ground round the water-hole while others quenched their thirst, and when the first lot came up the others, who had obviously been seeing that no danger approached, came down and had their turn. Then they all streaked back into the bush, not having wasted any time at all at the water. I noticed, too, that the last three to leave were rather old rams. As soon as the young are weaned the rams leave the herd, and the mating season commences.

Coming home we happened upon a big ram water-buck feeding on the young green grass which was growing round the edge of a drying water-hole. He simply stood and looked at us. I made noises at him, and we whistled, but he did not move, because he was quite definitely interested in us. He cut a somewhat comic figure as he stood, no more than twenty yards away, with his head up in a kind of sideways quiz. Then, getting bored, he trotted off up the side and away into the grass.





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Continuing on our way, we came to rough burnt-grass-covered places, and while jogging along dreamily we were startled and amused when a sudden scrunching sounded and a little cloud of ash and charred grass rose in the evening air. Old Juma Harba muttered "*Nimr*"¹—which it was—and the beast was just as surprised as we were. Then we saw beyond the clump of grass patches, behind which he had been hiding, in the black ash, a family of pigs—wart-hogs—mother and children, who had been digging for roots. They scuttled off, scared by the sound of the departing leopard and our approach, the children keeping well to mother's heels! Tetel and water-buck were strolling about at a distance—we could see them as they passed among the tree-trunks. We reached camp by dark, and glad I was to get there. The day had been very long. The good camp-boy, Abdu, had got a little water ready for me in the bath, so I scrubbed myself and tumbled into bed.

Errol had got the wireless fixed up, but although we were able sometimes to listen to England, America, and various other places, America was the only country that picked up any of Errol's messages. We had several letters afterward from people there telling us that they had received them.

But photography was our constant occupation. All our hides were finished—we had about eight of them at the various water-holes and on the plains.

Here are some diary records of those times.

¹ Leopard.

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“ *Thursday, February 21.*—C.T. and I went down to the farthest hide to-day and finished it off, and I think there is no doubt that we shall get some good buck-pictures from there, if not other game stuff. Apparently some buck had stood up with their fore-legs on the side of the hide and had eaten the grass that had been put on as camouflage! Coming back we saw about thirty *tiang*, or black hartebeest, which differ from the tetal, or ordinary hartebeest, in that instead of having long curling and sloped-back horns they have plain ones, and their coat hasn't so much yellow, but has rather a blue tinge in it. We passed within twenty or twenty-five yards of them, and they didn't move.

“ It is quite a trek going to the hides. They are so far away from the camp. C.T. is going into the hide on the plain to-morrow before daylight.

“ *Friday, February 22—morning.*—Hassan and old Juma Harba trekked off early this morning, and they will be away until they have found out something about elephant. They've gone to 'get tabs' on them, and to find out by scouting if they are localized to a certain extent or not. When we've got enough pictures from the hides we're going to try for elephant-pictures.

“ C.T. went off early as arranged, and Errol and I with the boys are searching round for a suitable tree with a bees' nest in its trunk for the bee-tree sequence. There are plenty of swarms, but it's hard to locate them.

“ Errol picked up Rugby last night, and we are glad to learn that the King is better. It's strange to

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know that there is ice in London to-day. Errol heard it in the Rugby news. 'The Prince was on the ice in the Palace grounds.'

"Ice! goodness—you ought to see the heat here making a squiggly haze in the air! Kima is sitting with his head bent down, and Old Stinker is laid out flat with honey-flies buzzing about his head. These he lazily resents, and occasionally puts up a tired hand to try to catch them.

"The ground here is dark grey, and the sand is as fine as face powder. The consequence is that we're grimy more than half the time.

"We haven't had any more speckles of rain.

"*Saturday, February 23.*—Errol and I spent the whole day in the third water-hole hide—he got pictures of gazelles drinking. One took fright during his drink, threw up his head, and then dashed out of the picture with the speed of a rocket.

"We waited all day without anything else coming near except a few birds, and then at about four in the afternoon we saw, at close range, a perfectly glorious sight (the hide is only a few yards away from the water-hole). All the hartebeest that came down the other day, when the other hide was being made, came back complete with babies, and drank. I don't think that anyone *could* get a better buck-picture.

"So the day's been successful. Hurray and hurray!

"*From the hide. Sunday, February 24.*—We had a great storm last night, with lightning and thunder, so to-day is cold. The buck won't come to drink.

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There isn't a thing in sight. C.T. is in the other hide.

"I'm sure we shan't see anything. Kima followed us down yesterday like a dog. It amused us to see how much he loved it, so we loosed him again to-day, and I brought Stinker too. They play about in the bushes near the hide, and when they are tired of that they dart in through the 'windows' and go to sleep on my lap, or else sniff about looking for something to eat.

"*Monday, February 25.*—No luck to-day as yet, and it must be about two o'clock. It is still too cold after the thunder-storm. Going home last night we saw a fine water-buck ram and his lady feeding on short grass in an old water-hole. They didn't mind us a bit. They looked interested, that was all.

"Coming here to-day we saw a lot of fresh buffalo spoor. So it seems that they live round about here, and we shall see the whole herd if we can exercise a little patience.

"The lions stopped roaring when we came here, and since the first few days we have not seen any fresh spoor. Juma Harba says that some wandering Fellata have been through this way, and as they are famous for being able to make good lion magic it is obvious what has happened—they've simply cast a spell, and therefore no lion dares to remain here! Juma appears to be wrong, though, because Abdu took me round the *boma* the night before last, after we got home, and showed me spoor of a lion that had been right round the branch enclosure of the camp. Certainly something has disturbed me

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every night since we've been here, and I've been distinctly nervy. It does not often happen to me—I'm always too sleepy to worry, after the first few nights at a new camp—but I wake with a fright every night now, and all through the dark hours here I sense things—strange unvocal things. If they'd only make some animal noise I shouldn't feel so jumpy about them. They just walk about and crackle the dry leaves under their feet. I'm not half as frightened of the lion I can hear roaring as the one I can't. I don't like waking with a start every few hours, hearing some uncanny noise near my head, and not knowing what it is.

“Last night I really *did* hear lions roaring, but they were not very close, and after I heard them I felt better and had a lovely sleep!

“*Tuesday, February 26.*—C.T. and I spent a peaceful and patient day in one of the hides, and we didn't see a single thing. It takes a bit of doing to sit in a hide which is like a round box in the ground with a roof resembling the top of an ant-heap. There isn't much room.

“Errol went to the buffalo hide and only saw a hartebeest. However, he says that he got a jolly picture of him.

“The two ‘funny old men’ of the film (anything less funny in real life I've never seen) have at last found a bee-tree, so, while C.T. goes off to a hide to-morrow before dawn, Errol and I intend to sally forth with the two funny men and do the bee-tree sequence. The tree is an hour and a half's march away from here.

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"Old Juma Harba reported, when we got back from the hide, that elephant are feeding in this part of the world. Seeing that there are water-holes here and trees with juicy leaves, it is possible.

"Kima came down from camp, on his own, to the hide where C.T. and I were to-day. I can't imagine how he found the way, because the hide is miles away, through long grass, and across a river-bed. But then he is an extremely bright monkey.

"There are three pack-donkeys. One has had a sore back, which C.T. has been doctoring with vaseline and iodoform. The unfortunate beast is better, and in a day or two C.T. will go off for a few days in search of elephant. The time is flying on. Soon it will be March again.

"It looks rather like rain this evening.

"There are thousands of bees buzzing round the *burma*,¹ and yet we've had a lot of bother locating a nest. Of course, what happens is that the boys cut down trees in which bees have made their honey, take the stuff, and say nothing about it, fearing that the other boys would demand some of the treasure.

"*Wednesday, February 27.*—I'm alone in camp to-day. C.T. went off in the middle of the night and sent back a note to say that buffalo had passed his hide before light, which was just before he got there, and he suggested that Errol should follow with extreme rapidity, taking cameras, and boys to carry them, and try to get up to them.

¹ Water-jar.

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"I did not feel strong enough to go plunging through high and blackened grass with the party, so I'm taking a day off. I'm so anxious to hear what the result will be. I don't expect either of them back until dark.

"There are a lot of hyenas round here, extremely big ones, and they make a hideous, high-pitched noise. Ali woke and found one sniffing at him last night. He yelled at the beast, 'who moved off very quietly, and *too* slowly, as if he didn't want to go.' This according to Ali. I suppose he thinks that a wicked Fellata has turned himself into a hyena again!

"*Thursday, February 28.*—Errol got back about four o'clock yesterday looking awfully ill. He had managed to get a picture of the buffalo, but when he went closer the whole herd of about 150 charged off in another direction. He said that they were huge black buffalo, and not the west coast red ones.

"He got what should prove to be a topping picture of a large family of wart-hogs—three males, about four females, and umpteen little ones. Errol said that it was amusing to see the old ones pushing the babies up an incline away from the camera—obviously smuggling them into safety.

Juma Harba was with him, and in the middle of the day they found and ate some honey. Then Errol drank water, and he got violently ill with doubling-up pains in his old interior. He says that old Juma fanned away the flies and looked after him like a mother!

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“ C.T. came back with some water-buck pictures.

“ To-day he has gone back into the hide, and Errol and I have just returned after a long hot trek to the bee-tree. It was farther than we thought—about two hours away—and sweat fell with thuds on to my shirt from my face and head. We did all the sequence of the ‘funny old men’ taking the honey out, stuff that was necessary for the picture. The story demands that after some business of being stung the funny men should be frightened by a lion, and in their haste to be gone one of the old things drops the burning brand of grass with which he has been smoking out the bees’ nest. That is how the forest-fire commences.

“ We got some good footage of grass twelve feet high blazing as well.

“ Coming home I saw a leopard flash by, and a herd of tetal were cropping the green shoots of grass.

“ *Later.*—C.T. is back. He had a successful day and got what he has been waiting for—*tiang*. He got close pictures and all the other camera ranges he wanted. By now we’ve almost got all the buck-pictures we need, and shall be going farther afield in search of lion and elephant soon. Then home! How lovely! I shall be so anxious to see the picture on the screen after all we’ve gone through to make it.

“ Adolph is here! Adolph the gay young rooster I saved from the Dinkas at the Bahr-el-Arab—away east. It was an awful tragedy when the *hamla* arrived at the Bahr-el-Arab to find that they had





JACKSON'S HARTEBEESTE

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forgotten Adolph and his young lady wives. So we sent a message back to Buram from there, and asked the Nazir to send them down to us, and here they are on bulls, having arrived a couple of days ago, together with meal and food for the boys. It's funny to see Adolph strutting about as if he owned the camp and everybody in it, and he crows as beautifully as ever in the dewy morn and even in the stilly night! He's an elegant bird—his four wives are of varying colours, one is white, the others, red, grey, and black respectively. Just like Adolph to go in for contrasts!

"This evening I tossed a coin for C.T. and Errol—'heads' Errol and 'tails' C.T., and 'heads' had it—so Errol is busy this evening getting his cameras and gadgets together, and Juma Harba, his two boys, and Achmed are preparing food for five days.

"He goes after elephant. The party will look for fresh spoor, and, if it is to be found, will follow it until they come up to the elephant. It will be hard and fast going. I could never keep up the pace, I'm afraid. I hope he will be successful.

"'The production' is finished, and we are really going slowly back home now.

"*Saturday, March 2.*—A hot, hot day.

"Errol trekked off at dawn, and will return after about four days and give C.T. his turn.

"C.T. has been looking at spoor and likely places for some red-monkey pictures. He has found a place and will sit in a kind of grass-screen hide with his camera and try to photograph them.

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"We had an invasion of bees this morning. An Arab brought into camp some honey which we bought for 4 piastres. Then the riot began. Bees simply buzzed in a frenzy round our heads, settled in clusters round the monkeys' food-plates, and attacked them too. We had to cut the monkeys loose, of course, but the poor darlings were covered with stings. Kima's eyelid, almost closed up, is of a fiery redness. Stinker caught it mostly in his hands. We kept perfectly still fortunately, and so escaped being stung. The boys always beat their hands in the air and thus infuriate the bees, so they always get all the more severely stung. We lit smoke-fires all over the place, and the fury of the bees gradually subsided, but they stayed in camp all day, I believe. They cleared off as if by magic at sundown.

"*Saturday, March 3.*—I'm alone to-day, not feeling up to trekking.

"In London I'd shudder at the thought of staying alone in the wildest wilds, but the reality doesn't seem so bad. It's like that with everything. When you're in it with both feet your fear all goes.

"One of Juma Harba's men told us that he had been poaching elephant in French territory last year. We had been talking about the little honey-bird and hearing the Arabs avow their absolute belief in this bird's habit of leading a man to honey if he likes him, or leading him to danger if he has a grudge against him.

"But this particular fellow told about another of this bird's tricks. He said that once he had

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speared an elephant, and after some days had taken the tusks a few miles off and buried them, so that the evidence of his poaching might lie snug and concealed until he returned that way with more tusks. This I might say was in French territory. He went away, and after he had been walking for some hours his attention was attracted by a honey-bird who was making a great twittering in the trees just ahead. 'Honey-bird!' he said to himself cheerfully. 'I'm rather keen on honey'—or words to that effect—and he followed the bird a long, long way, and in a wide circle. The bird was twittering all the while and taking him, so he thought, in the direction of the bees' hoard. After a very long journey the bird stopped at a tree, and twittered no more. 'Believe me,' ended the man, 'that bird had perched on the very tree under which my two tusks lay buried!'

"He told the tale very convincingly, and every one firmly believed his story and read occult meanings into it. 'Yes,' they chattered, 'and then there was that time, so and so,' etc., etc. So they go on. They are enough to make Baron Munchausen rattle his bones with envy! They've got some weird stories about the natives over the border on the French side, about 100 miles away, turning themselves into small cats and miaowing fiercely. If people give them milk they are appeased, but if they don't get the milk they suddenly inflate themselves into an enormous size, jump on their victim, and eat him. If the intended victim is a woman and she cries out and others come to her rescue

the cat 'deflates' himself, becomes a tiny mewling kitten, and scampers off into the bush again! Well, well!

" *Monday, March 4.*—C.T. came back last night full of joy. He'd had a good day and felt a sense of fulfilment. He got some perfect pictures of wild pig. First the old father came crashing down to the water-hole. 'Just as if he had dashed away from the others to have a short, sharp roll in the water and mud to cool himself.' C.T. saw him roll quickly once or twice, stand up as if saying, 'Ah, that's better,' and trot off to join the family, obviously to tell them that they ought to try it, 'cos it was fine.

" C.T. then saw him leading the whole family back down the bank—mother and all the youngsters. They plunged and paddled and cavorted and generally enjoyed themselves. Then, when they were tired, they trotted off, with their manes straight up and their tails twiggling in the air.

" He photographed a red monkey standing on the edge of the flat water-hole, with her baby clinging to her; then drinking and standing up again to scout round before drinking some more.

" He hopes to get more monkey to-day. They didn't come in the right positions for the camera.

" He says that there were heaps of tracks of buffalo round the drinking-hole.

" *Tuesday, March 5.*—Isn't it too disappointing? To-day elephants passed the hide in which C.T. was concealed yesterday, and, of course, he wasn't there. The boys who went down early to collect

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his cameras and take them to another hide saw the fresh tracks.

“By way of compensation we heard from a stray Mandala that Errol had been seen a day’s march from here hot on the spoor of elephant. He may have got up to them.

“Not much to tell—but the day has not long begun. C.T. saw the same game at his hide yesterday as those he had spotted the day before. I am quite convinced that certain groups of animals frequent their own special water-hole. They don’t drink just anywhere—you can see this by watching particular water-holes. It is always the same families of tetal and things which come to drink every day. The country is full of small water-holes, and so they have no need to gather in big herds at any particular one.

“*Later—evening.*—Errol came in this evening. He had no luck. He followed on elephant spoor, but he says there are parties of Mandala and a few Arab hunters with horses and spearmen out chasing them all over the place! He saw the spoor of the hunting parties, so goodness knows if we’ll ever come up to an undisturbed herd. Errol says, too, that he believes that there is only one herd here at present, and that it is being vigorously chased.

“His Arab carriers (a lazy lot of animals these Arabs) grouched all the time about being made to walk so hard and far, and said that they were used to riding on horses and not walking on foot. They wanted us to send for their horses, and pay them 10 piastres a day for each, plus grain for their feed!

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And if the horses died through fly, that we should pay £12 per head! I'm afraid they'll have to continue complaining when they have any walking to do. We are thinking of getting rid of all of them, and engaging the strong Mandala of these parts as camera-carriers and elephant-trackers.

"C.T. leaves in a day to try his luck, and we shan't move from this spot until after he has got back. I hope we shall get these wretched elephant soon. Of course, if we had more time, we could get *all* we want in a month, after the first heavy rains. As it is we've got to get what we can in as short a period as possible. We are not shooting anything here because of frightening the game.

"Abdu, the camp-boy, amused me to-day when he introduced a Mandala youth of extreme strength, complete with large heavy water-tin on his shoulder, saying that this was his 'boy,' engaged and paid by him, and who would fetch the camp water for him from the sand-hole in the river, and help him wash—all for the princely sum of 5 piastres, which is equivalent to 1s. per month! And I expect Abdu will persuade him to do most of his other work as well.

"We took a bit of cine of Boru and Nikitu passing the water-hole where the pigs played the other day, which will be cut into one of the hunting sequences.

"Abd el Nebi¹ was sitting beside a bush on the edge of the *dahl* shaving Nikitu's side-whiskers before being photographed when, to every one's surprise, a big lion jumped out of the bush beside which they

¹ Boru.





IN AN 'ANTHILL HIDE'

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were sitting, thereby almost causing Boru to cut Nikitu's ear off in the excitement of the moment. C.T. and Errol grabbed their cameras and tried to follow the lion.

"I was highly amused to note that instead of whispering hoarsely, holding rifles tensely, and following stealthily, in accordance with the best writers' descriptions, they ran at the top of their speed with cameras after the beast who was going all out—'running like hell and a scalded cat,' as Errol has it.

"Anyhow, I'm glad we haven't met a truly hungry and angry lion yet.

"C.T. is all ready to leave at dawn to-morrow. He has Achmed, Hassan, Juma Harba, and a lot of carriers and people. It is do or die this time, for we hope that we'll be finished soon. We're only waiting for these elephant-pictures now—the lions we'll get on our way back, in country where they are plentiful.

"I got old Juma Harba and Achmed Fuddle to explain to me how they hunted elephant, each one contributing bits of the story. They both came and squatted round the fire and, with extremely eloquent gestures, told how the hunt began and how it went on right up to the kill and the return with the tusks to the village, not omitting any of the quaint details of their welcome home.

"*Thursday, March 7.*—C.T. left early this morning, and Errol went off in another direction to photograph and won't be back until to-night. I am alone in camp again, but I'm not nervous. I heard

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a lion roaring early this morning in the direction of Dahl Chol—the spot where the other one jumped out of the bush yesterday. It is probably the same lion, and Errol might get a chance of photographing him as he comes down to drink.

“It is still early. If anything of interest is to be recorded it has still to happen to-day. C.T. had a four days’ beard and looked villainous, but happy.

“I do hope he will be successful.

“*Later — night-time.* — Errol hasn’t returned yet, although it is long after dark. I hope he is all right.

“Two lions began roaring at four o’clock this afternoon, which is rather unusual, I think, and they sounded as if they were angry. Obviously they hadn’t killed anything, because they were moving about. I heard them at various places round the camp, about a mile or so away, but once they came closer in. They have been silent for the last half-hour, but now they are at it again hammer and tongs, and much too close to be comfortable. I do hope Errol doesn’t walk into them. It’s as dark as anything.

“I think these Arabs are all right, they’ve been very civil all day. I shall get a book and read by the fire. I’m not a bit nervous really, only I’m worried about Errol’s being so late.”

CHAPTER XVI

LION AND BUFFALO

ERROL came back all right and brought great news, for he had got a splendid picture of a lion. He arrived in camp soon after I had settled down by the fire, just strolled in, and in his unconcerned and quiet way said that he had seen and photographed some wild dogs—which in itself was a triumph. He added that a large number of them had come down to drink and had lounged about looking tired, as if they had just been hunting. They had broad ears with tufts at the ends; their bodies were black and light tan, and they were in good condition. He added that first he had photographed some wart-hogs, and then some jolly Red Hussar monkeys. He had got them drinking and playing in a setting which was framed by trees, with the Mandala Jebels in the distance and fluffy clouds scudding in the sky.

Then, still quietly reporting his progress, he came to the lion.

How I wished that I had gone with him!

The lion, as he came slowly down the game-path to the water to drink, looked as if he had had a heavy meal. There had been just enough time to get the focus of the camera perfect.

The lion drank a great deal and then raised his head with the crystal drops falling from his beard.

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He was only eighteen yards away. Having quenched his thirst, he then slowly turned and walked a few yards back up the path. Errol, afraid of losing him, made a loud roaring noise to attract the attention of the beast, whereupon the lion whipped round and looked about, as if to say "What on earth was that?" Then he slowly returned to the water, and walked round the edge of it toward the hide where Errol was seated photographing him. He came within five yards of Errol, and put himself right out of focus, so Errol took his rifle and crept out at the far side of the hide away from the lion, intending to shoot. But he was unlucky, for, as he went stealing forward, the wind puffed his scent to the lion, who leapt away with astonishing speed into the bush.

I was so braced to hear of the getting of such an important picture that all the discomforts of the past simply ceased to be, and everything seemed worth while.

I '*willed*' very hard that C.T. would also bring his elephant home in the camera. I told myself that I *knew* that the pictures would be all that we had hoped and worked for. And so to bed filled with thoughts of success.

The next day I intended to stay in camp again, so Errol went off by himself at dawn to Dahl Chol, which was about five miles distant.

I was having porridge and coffee at about nine o'clock when his boy came back with a note saying: "I've photographed and plugged a big leopard. Great fun. Please send spare slides for still camera." The prospect was attractive, so I decided to go out

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myself. I collected some boys, put Errol's revolver into my pocket, and set out into the bush, zig-zagging over rough high grassy places and broken-up ground with burnt-grass ashes lying thickly upon it. We were within half a mile of the *dahl* when a Mandala boy stole up and excitedly whispered Errol's warning, to approach with care, because of a herd of buffalo he was trying to photograph.

Surrounding us were a lot of small bush and some straight, tall trees. I climbed with difficulty into one of them to see if I could discern anything of the buffalo.

Kima, I must tell you, having broken his lead after I left, had followed me, and when he saw me up the tree he was delighted. He scampered up the tall trunk, expecting me to follow, and sat looking down and making chattering noises of encouragement!

I got up as far as I could and spotted some of the buffalo moving about, some fifty or sixty yards away. I clambered down and, telling the sitting boys to stay where they were, ordered the Mandala boy and old Achmed Fuddle to follow me. I had my rifle, and they took their spears. We crept forward like cats, hiding behind bushes and moving slowly, trying to avoid treading on the big dry rustling leaves which were lying on the ground.

We saw a big black bull shaking his head, feeding, and swishing the flies away with his tail. Then, moving a little closer, we saw the whole herd—about sixty of them. They were mostly black—a kind of dark grey-black—the few reddish ones were

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so dark brown that the red tinge showed only as they moved in the light.

And then I saw Errol. At that time the buffalo were only about thirty-five yards away from me, and he was stalking them from a position slightly to one side of the herd, at about twenty-five yards' range. He was squirming on his back, with his feet toward them, on the side of a big ant-heap, through the top of which grew an aradeiba-tree—a tall one with branches high up. He was thus facing the herd, and keeping his eyes on the beasts. His left arm helped to propel him downward and forward, while his right cautiously reached backward to bring down his camera slowly inch by inch, so that, he told me afterward, he should not disturb the leaves nor make a sound.

The wind was right for us all, and the buffalo had no suspicion of Errol's approach. We watched him, fascinated, and I trembled for him and wondered what would happen next. Downward he moved, still inch by inch, so indistinct that he seemed to be part of the leaf-strewn and grassy, tree-shaded mound.

The buffalo, still unsuspecting, just grazed quietly on, and a young one playfully pushed his head against his mother's flank.

Then a twig snapped, and Errol 'froze' in his tracks. But the buffalo did not take much notice. A couple of cows lifted their heads a little higher, and went on chewing again.

After a while Errol lifted his camera, and I could see him photographing—the animals did not seem

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to mind the slight whirl of the mechanism. Then I saw him crawl closer and take up a new position screened by some low leafy bushes growing between the trunks of two slender trees about twenty yards, or perhaps a little less, from the buffalo, on level ground, and begin turning off more film.

The wind kept in our favour, and the buffalo remained quiet. Some were lying down, and the oldest bull was standing flicking flies with his tail, while little birds ran along his head and back looking for insects.

Then a slight sound, or a whiff of our scent, caught for an instant, must have warned one of the cows that man was near, for she started forward and took a few steps in the direction of Errol, who continued to photograph. The cow became a little more nervous, moved again with short steps, turned back and stood for a moment. Then she threw up her head again. She had seen Errol, and wondered, no doubt, what he was, lying there so still. She started forward again at a good speed, moving in his direction and stopping exactly twelve yards in front of the whirring camera in his hand. Then she grew panicky and, with a swish of her tail, turned and ran back to the others, which frightened them, for the whole herd charged in all directions, some past us, making a great crashing din as they swept over the dry leaves and thick-stemmed grass and sticks.

I retreated a few yards, looking out for a tree, with my heart thumping, wondering how I could possibly climb trees which had hardly any branches

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to afford hand-hold. Such branches as they had were high up, with big, long, glossy leaves. The Arabs called them 'looloo' trees.

But there was no cause for fear, because the beasts had passed on either side of us.

When I reached Errol's side he was wreathed in smiles and said, "Gosh, *what* pictures I've got!" Then he proceeded to tell me what had happened before my arrival.

After shooting the leopard, which he had trailed away from the hide, he had seen buffalo-tracks—fresh—had followed the spoor, and had come on the buffalo close by. It was a great day for us.

The leopard-picture he had got promised to be good too. He had photographed him drinking, and he said that the leopard lay down like a cat to drink. We were pleased to have a daylight picture of this drinking business, because it was so unusual. We felt that all the world was ours as we jogged back to camp in the evening, with the soft pink clouds hardly stirring in the sky, and Kima loping like a dog at our heels.

CHAPTER XVII

ODDS AND ENDS

THE boys were looking out anxiously for the new moon, which would end Ramadan and see the beginning of their festival. I heard shouts of joy, so I supposed that their month of fasting was over. They had been climbing trees to catch a glimpse of the magic moon. I too should be glad when Ramadan came to an end if I happened to be a Mohammedan in a hot country. Only at night, after sundown, can they eat, and they are not allowed to drink even water during the day.

There was still no news of C.T., but we took that as a hopeful sign. It looked as if he were really on the trail of elephant.

The morning after Ramadan ended was almost cool. A heavenly wind was blowing, and we began to fear that we should have the rains upon us before we got those eagerly desired pictures.

From elephant to civet cats is a far cry, but to cheer us up a Mandala brought in two kittens, tiny objects, whose mother he had just eaten! I could scarcely credit it, but Achmed's answer to my question, "Where is their mother?" was to point to the Mandala and say, "Him eat him." I took pity on the little things and adopted them. Both Kima and Stinker smelled them and turned them about, but were otherwise not very interested. It

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was hard to know what to give them to eat, for their little tummies were so minute. We had no tinned milk, so I started them off on sugar-water, and followed that with sweetened barley-water. It was dull for us with C.T. away, and my diary records a series of tiresome days:

“*Thursday, March 14.*—We didn’t do any photography, we hardly saw a thing. A blank day all round. I wonder how C.T. is faring. It is a week since he left. It looks hopeful, this protracted leave. He must be hot on the trail.

“*Friday, March 15.*—We seem to have struck a dud patch. We haven’t seen any game to-day. It really looks as if the animals visit particular water-holes, and when they realize that human beings go near the one which they have made their own they just leave it and go to another unfrequented one, or join up with other game at another hole. I’m hoping that C.T. has been able to get up to elephant.

“*Saturday, March 16.*—The bees are so active round our water-jar, and anything else which contains water, that the stuff even has a taste of honey in it. It is sometimes impossible to have a bath because bees simply cloud over the water and buzz in fury if you come near.

“We didn’t see much to-day, except baboons, lots of them, at the hide.

“*Sunday, March 17.*—Blank.

“*Monday, March 18.*—I wish C.T. could send us word of what’s happening. I’m getting anxious. To-day is the eleventh day.

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"The game seems to have gone from here. We haven't seen anything but tetal these last days, and heaps of baboons, of course.

"*Tuesday, March 19.*—I think we've got all the game we're likely to get in this spot and it's time to trek. We have been very lucky and we have got some grand pictures.

"We shall get lion farther north when C.T. comes back, having got his elephants. He, poor man, must be having an awful sweat to get anywhere near them. If he has got elephant we shall soon finish the picture. It seems as if the time will never come for us to see anything else but straight trees and our own faces!

"Errol has a queer home-made pipe. The bowl is roughly carved ebony, and the stem is the handle of a glass-cutter, with a hole running through it which was made by a piece of red-hot wire laboriously forced through. It's quaint. And he also has a young moustache, of which he appears to be inordinately pleased, because he is always finding excuses not to shave it off, his chief one being that he has but one razor-blade, and is keeping that for 'when we come up to the surface.'

"*Wednesday, March 20.*—The two civet kittens are thriving, but it is awfully hard to get them to swallow enough, they've got such tiny throats. Queer little funnies—they are uncannily intelligent, and know me already—when they hear my voice they simply bellow for food.

"My hair is so long now that I can twist it up into ear-phones quite easily.

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" We've got to the stage now of just waiting for C.T. to come back. We can't do anything more here except to repeat the pictures that we've already got, and that would be wasting film.

" How lovely if he has got, or is getting, those elusive elephants !

" *Thursday, March 21.*—There are clouds to-day, and it is consequently cooler. It's going to be pretty lively with heat when we make our journey back. I remember how ghastly it was last year in April when we went down east to the Bahr-el-Arab at Abyei, with the heat of the engine adding to the temperature outside. Sometimes I couldn't stand it and got out and walked. I fear we shall have a similar experience.

" A hawk flew by a moment ago with a hunk of meat he had clawed from the cooking-enclosure. It must have been insecurely held, for in his hurry to get away he dropped it just as the infuriated Markoum dashed out after it. The hawk swooped down to recover it, but the cook got there first. The hawk whistled furiously, flapped, and flew off, and is now sitting wistfully in a tree watching and waiting for another opportunity.

" I'm longing to get away. This is not *my* Africa, this numbing, deadly place.

" *Friday, March 22.*—In camp to-day. Errol is sewing a rubber sole on to his shoe, and is making a snappy job of it too, although he has broken nearly all my darning-needles. He makes a hole with an awl, then thrusts the darning-needle through, and pulls it out on the other side with a huge pair

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of pliers! He has done one shoe, and has almost finished the second.

"He has developed yesterday's still photos of baboon, *tiang*, and tetal, and they are all very beautiful. The cine pictures he got of the *tiang* and baboons drinking and meandering about together ought to be lovely. I've never seen buck and baboon in one picture before.

"A cool wind is blowing this morning.

"No news of C.T. It's awful waiting from day to day not knowing where he is or what he is doing—whether he is safe or not.

"*Saturday, March 23.*—A runner, after many weeks of trekking, has brought us mail. It is heavenly, after so long a silence.

"M. in Nyala, the kind friend, sent us some books and papers, as he always does when the mail comes.

"Lots of good news from home as well.

"*Sunday, March 24.*—Quite blank. Feel dud.

"*Monday, March 25.*—Among the mail I got was a lovely letter from R. in Aden complete with snap of himself with an *amazing* beard. Men are too absurd about beards. I've just looked again at Errol's moustache.

"Kima looks simply sweet when he plays with the baby civets. They're so tiny and crawl all over him, and he adores them. I mean he *adored* them—because there is only one now. You see Kima didn't realize how soft the other little one was, because when he held him in his mouth—as he does Old Stinker—and pressed a tiny bit, he killed

it. But Kima is *too* sorry. He didn't know it would break—really.

“*Tuesday, March 26.*—Great news! Hurray! C.T. arrived this morning, *complete with beard*, of course. *And* he has got elephant-pictures! Hurray! *Hurray!* He says that the Arabs he took with him to act in the spear-throwing scene ran away at the critical moment when the elephant came, so he had to shoot the animal. However, he thinks that what he was able to photograph before he fired will be very dramatic.

“C.T. has walked in all about 350 miles. He went to Dahl Kurru, on to Jebel M'Busa, saw no elephant. Then on again to Jebel Andauisa, where he saw his first elephant. Then back again to Dahl Kurru. Saw no elephant and went on to Bahr Sirri—saw nothing. From there he walked to the Rikki river, and there found fresh elephant spoor and followed it back to Andauisa on the northern side of the Jebel.

“Then he went back again to Rikki, followed it down past Bangabo and down to the junction of the Rikki and the Adda. Then down the Adda, and a forced march across waterless country of about 47 miles back to the Shaleika, and then, last, to camp.

“He got his second lot of elephants between the Rikki and the Andauisa. He has done a very fine and extremely hard trek. The Arabs say that he is very *shedid*.

“We have sent to Kafia Kingi to get carriers, and as soon as they come we shall be off, after lion.





THE ELEPHANT C.T. HAD TO SHOOT

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"The picture is finished! Finished! But we shall get all we can going back, of course.

"*Wednesday, March 27.*—C.T. and Errol spent the morning pottering about camp getting things ready. Errol overhauled the car.

"We went off to the hides this afternoon, but didn't see anything to photograph.

"They're concentrating on still pictures and panoramas just now.

"*Thursday, March 28.*—Nothing much to-day. Got a couple of stills. Kima is loose and creating havoc.

"*Friday, March 29.*—C.T. tells me a story about Tahia, the Koreish boy he took with him to carry his camera when he followed the elephant. It appears that in the days after Ali Dinaar was defeated the Koreish people got possession of the Arabs' rifles, and carried them off to their own country in the Bahr-el-Ghazal, close to the French border, where they worked out a grand scheme.

"They knew that every year the Arabs went into French territory to poach elephant. So the Koreishi waited about in the bush, hidden, until the tusks had been cut out by the Arabs, and when the concealed Koreish people judged the number of tusks to be sufficient they discharged their rifles. The Arabs, taking alarm at the shots, and not being able to see their pursuers, thought that the French were on their heels and bolted, leaving, as was intended by the Koreish, their ivory and meat.

"Thus Tahia, with many 'Ha, ha, ha's,' according to C.T.

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“ And, continuing, Tahia said that a young boy, his sister’s husband’s brother, who is here in camp with him now, had been on these ivory-thieving expeditions, and was the chief jester and soul of the parties. They had to warn him constantly to keep close to them, otherwise, being so tiny, he would have been forgotten and left behind in the hurry and eaten by the French cannibals!!!

“ I know the little kid well. He is very amusing, and simply rules all the boys in this camp. He is quick-witted, and jibes and teases them on every possible occasion. I think they rather like it. Of course, the Mandala and Koreish don’t belong to this bit of country at all, because it is so fly-ridden that it is uninhabitable. They come from the Jebels and places lying west around Kafja Kingi.

“ *Saturday, March 30.*—Our last day here. The carriers ought to be here some time to-night or to-morrow morning early.

“ When we got down to the hides this morning of course we saw, because we were not prepared to photograph them, a whole herd of red monkeys, some baboon, and a tremendous number of tetal.

“ We thought a photograph of one of the ‘ant-hill’ hides would be interesting, so we set up the mechanical camera, and let Kasim press the release as we got down into the hole. And of course I had to slip and fall in—very funny indeed—for anybody looking on—not for me. That bit will have to be cut.

“ Then we were photographed coming out, and finally we pulled down the whole side of the hide, to get a view of the interior.

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“ *Sunday, March 31.*—The last day of the month and the last day here. And I’m going to have a medal struck in memory of our patience. Game is game, but, oh, the days of blankness! nothing to do but mop our faces and drive off the flies. Dear old Africa!

“ I wish she was not so lovely and attractive, from a distance. I *know* I’m going to spend lots more years in the wilds of her.”

CHAPTER XVIII

HEART-ACHE

THE next day we started off, and had the worst day we had ever experienced on the 'road.' The tyres were punctured every few miles, and the plugs had to be cleaned as often.

To my sorrow, the baby civet kitten died. It was such a darling! We gave him tetal milk, which I am afraid simply solidified in his minutest of interiors. I tried to save him, but the effort was futile.

To add to the day's misfortunes, Kima sprang at me at lunch-time and bit a hole in my cheek! I was afraid I should be scarred for life. He bit my arm and fingers as well, and we had no iodine, which is the safest thing for monkey-bites.

The cause of it all was jealousy. Kima did not want me to give Old Stinker a dried wild fig, and without any warning he flew at my face.

His case was tried solemnly, and it was decreed that, as he had begun to bite my face, he would have to go. I was heart-broken at the prospect. We decided to wait until we got to the Bahr-el-Arab and let him and Stinker go there. Let him go!—the mere thought was more than I could bear.

The next day we made better progress; the tyres did not puncture so much, and we arrived and camped at a place called Kelb, which word translated into English means 'dog.' We expected to

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reach Hegerat, on the Bahr, on the morrow, and there I was to lose Kima. I endeavoured to reconcile myself to the justice of the decree. I reflected that he had bitten me six times since leaving England. When I say 'he' I mean 'she,' for Kima was a girl.

The bumping and crashing of the car through the dry swamps had been fierce, and I felt very sick. My face and hand, too, were paining me a great deal. There were a lot of trees near the camp, and the ground was strewn with mauve-coloured crackly dry leaves. The air was fragrant with a mingled tang of dry leaves and smoke, which was very pleasant in the cool evening air as I sat and watched the setting sun.

We had to get bulls at Kelb to take most of our kit, and the wretched Arabs there were reluctant to part with them. There was a great uproar all the following morning, and I thought our boys would be knifed. The Arabs hid their bulls, but in the end we got enough to take our stuff to Kundi, where we intended to wait and see if there were any available lions.

We did not reach the Bahr-el-Arab until late on the following day; our tyres were absolutely dead. Punctures, more punctures, and yet more punctures, had made up the story of the journey. I was tired and overwrought. Although my face was very painful, I felt I could not part with Kima; but C.T. and Errol insisted that she must go, because, they averred, she would be the cause of my death one day if I kept her.

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The place was full of monkeys of her own kind, and I felt that she would be very happy there with them. It was our "Camp of Dreams"—the most beautiful place I have ever seen in the whole of the Sudan. The birds there sing all day long, and the air is laden with the sweet scent of a million blossoms, and always there is plenty to eat for monkeys.

So we left her there. Don't ask me to describe how we abandoned her, how she frisked after us and then ran away again—as if to say "I'll see you again soon!" I could not bear to look, and turned away long before they were lost to view—Kima and her adopted baby. I was intensely miserable. I did not know that one could love an animal so much. I tried to console myself, vainly, by saying that she would be happier leading her own life among her own kind.

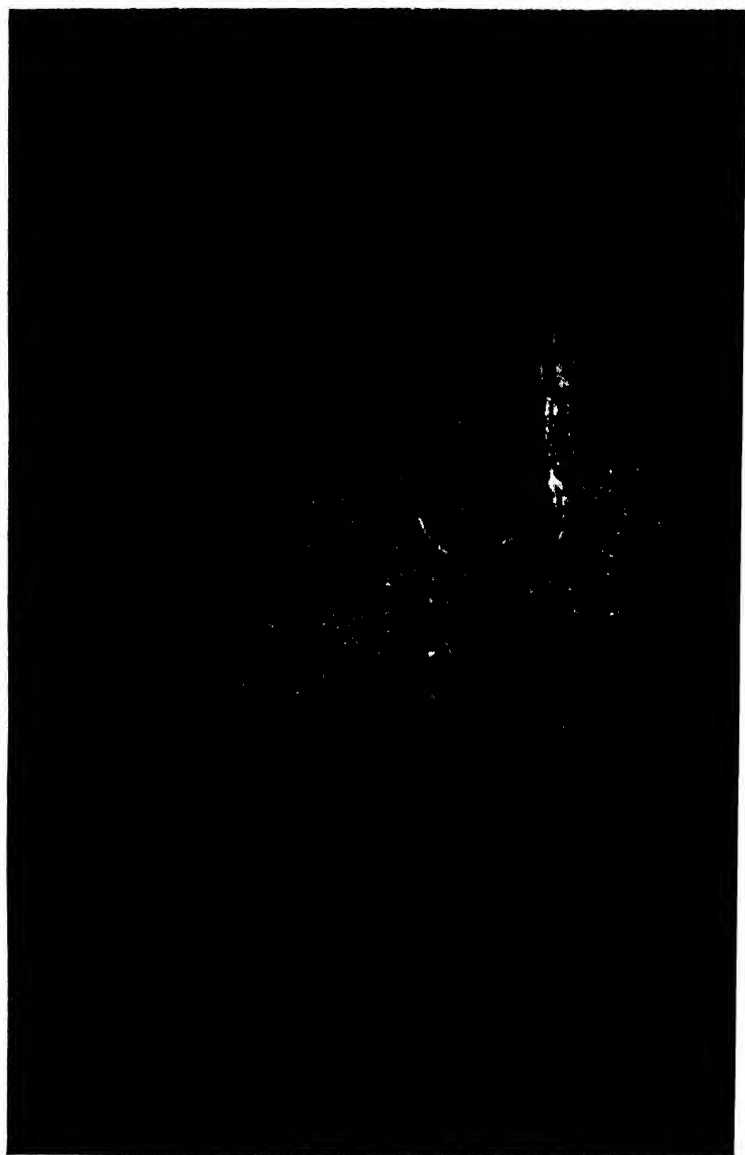
We bumped on to Kundi—a God-forsaken place—and camped, awaiting news of lion.

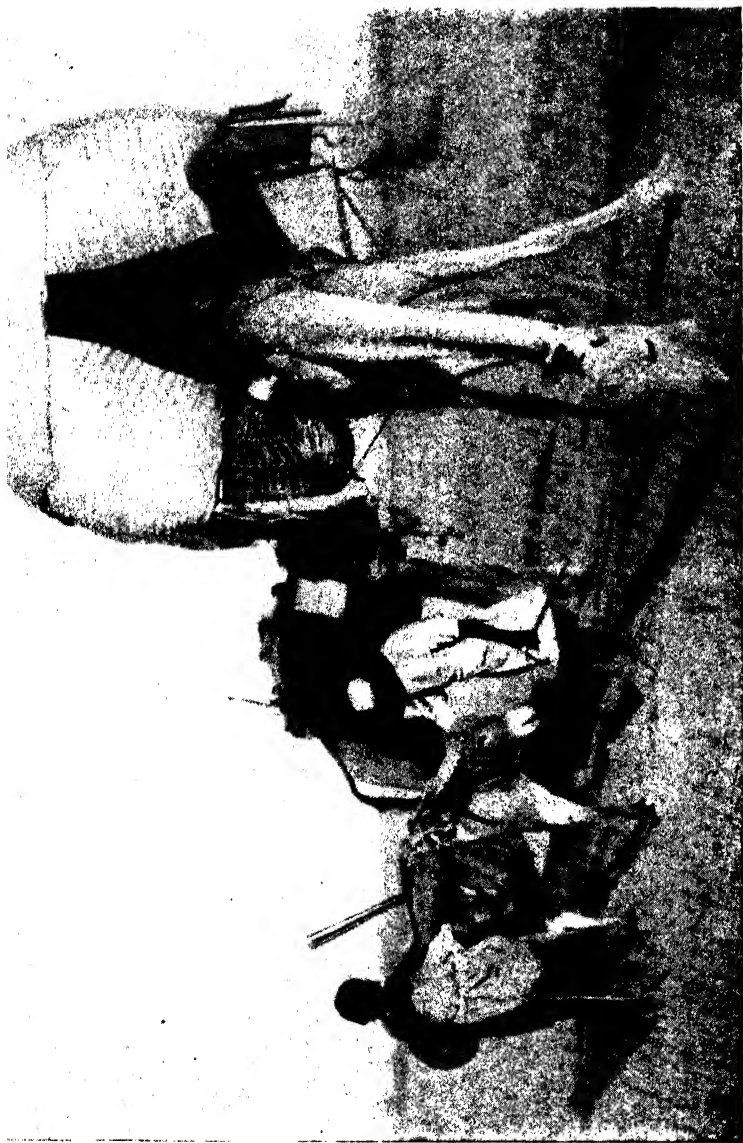
We left the following day. There were no lions.

The tyres were rags, the tubes were perished—great bursts had happened all the way from the river. We stopped every few miles to mend them—great gashes a foot and more wide. And the heat!

We sent an Arab off on horseback as soon as we came to a halt for the night with a letter to M. at Nyala, asking him to try to get new tubes. I doubted if the car would ever get as far as Buram.

However, the worst can change only for the better, and we had surprising luck next day. The battered tubes held out very well, and we did reach Buram.





MOVING HOUSE IN THE SUDAN

HEART-ACHE

I hated the look of the place. It was dry and desolate, and a score of things reminded me of the pet and companion I had lost—Kima. The pale sand was like a mirror, and blazed painfully into our eyes even immediately before sundown.

C.T. was obliged to go straight on to Kubbe because of some trouble with *hamla* bulls. The Arabs had been telling tall lies, saying that we had deliberately sent their bulls into fly country with some of our kit. This was all nonsense, of course, but it was a matter that must be put right.

The immediate job was to pack that part of the kit which was to go to El Obeid by *hamla*. Errol and I found it hard work. After that, travelling light, we meant to go west for lion and to revisit Buram again on our homeward way, staying just long enough to burn and photograph the cine village in flames.

I suppose it was because I was tired, but the thought of those flames was certainly comforting.

CHAPTER XIX

LIONS

WITH all our kit strewn over the sand, we sorted and discarded the things we no longer needed. Near the big *kornuk* an Arab merchant was selling for us articles such as the dark room, which was ant-proof and rather valuable to anybody who could find a use for such a hut. There were stores of food, tools, and many other things we no longer wanted, which were being haggled over and bought by the little *suk* traders, and the noise they made was like that of a hive of excited bees.

Thus lightened, we loaded the lorry, and, after a final look of silent farewell, left at noon on a hot, oppressive day. The dear old Nazir bade us an affectionate adieu, and would not wait to see the car drive off because he said that "his heart was too heavy within him."

We made a camp at a place about twenty miles off, and while Errol mended the radiator pipe, which had developed a leak, C.T. went a quarter of an hour's walk to the *tabariks*,¹ to see what the place was like for lion. He spent the night there, and got back early the next morning. He had shot and wounded what he thought was a lion, so he collected Errol and the boys to go after him. The

¹ Saucers of mud into which Arabs tip water which they draw from a well.

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Arabs who had been with him were all agog with excitement, and said that there was blood spoor leading into grass.

The country was very dry, and the earth in places was bare. Dry, broken, yellow grass-stems strewn the ground like a thin, worn carpet. The trees, which were mostly mimosa, were quite bare of leaves.

It was good sporting country. A hyena and a leopard came and drank out of a flat tin dish by the car during the night. I saw the shape of the hyena and heard the leopard grunt and cough.

C.T. and Errol returning told me that they had burnt out a patch of bush to try to find the 'lion' that C.T. had hit, and discovered that it was a leopard—up a tree. C.T. let the boys rush in and spear him, while Errol got some cine pictures of the incident. The skin was beautiful and in very fine condition. The leopard seemed to be larger than others I had seen.

After the leopard was skinned we trekked on and tried our luck at Gawad, where we drew a blank, and, pushing on again, we suffered punctures several times during the day. The heat was merciless: there was no shade; the 'road' was so hot that the patches on the tubes kept coming off.

We crossed the Wadi Bul-Bul at 3 P.M. on what we had been told was the path leading to Demain (a good spot for lions) and Abd el Sid, which is about two or three miles farther on.

But the path was the wrong one, and, to put the lid on our spell of bad luck, finally we burst one of

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our tubes. There was no hope of mending it—it was feet long, that burst! We knew that we should have to abandon the car until we could get more tubes from Fasher. With luck, they might arrive before the millennium.

Errol took Hassan and some other boys back along the path we had just travelled in an attempt to find Demain—wherever that was—and promised to send bulls with water-skins to us. We had only enough for one drink each, pending the arrival of that supply. Somewhat worried, we sat down to await events.

Luckily Errol found the place; the water came, and with it a note saying that the Fellata people at Demain were "a decent crowd and that we might find lion there.

The bulls came too, and all our kit went on to Demain, and ourselves with it. C.T.'s letter had been sent on to M. in Nyala, and he would, we knew, send out tubes as soon as possible. It certainly was quick work getting those bulls to us, and I cheered up considerably.

From Demain we trekked down along the west bank of the Wadi Bul-Bul. There's a romantic name for you! 'Wadi Bul-Bul,' and the Wadi, or water-course, is simply as lovely as its name. Great round and tall acacia-trees, mimosa, and colossal fig-trees—tremendous trees when fully grown—surrounded us.

We noted many varieties of birds, but no game, except small gazelles. Masses and masses of comic speckly guinea-fowl were feeding under the trees.



AN ARAB WITH HIS CAMEL READY TO RESUME A LONG MARCH IN SANDY COUNTRY



CATTLE DRINKING AT A 'TABARIK'

LIONS

And the air! It was drowsy and heavy with the scent of mimosa. It is strange how in Africa one can find, after passing through a belt of thick forest trees, patches of dry, scrubby bush which is very often small and scraggy mimosa.

There are numerous varieties of it. Some of the trees are giants, with great blobs of yellow ball-blossom, and there are medium-sized ones, and the scrubby, tiny-blossomed tree variety.

We were in Abu Hameira's country—old Abu being the same Nazir of the Fellata who came with his wife to visit us at Buram. He was away at the Bahr Adda with some of his people, and those in our neighbourhood were quite friendly, although I believed they were not very trustworthy. It was from this part of the world that the Fur rose under a homicidal *fikki* and swept into Nyala some years ago, and wiped out the station. Captain MacNeil and another officer were murdered. It was an awful tragedy.

We made camp under some giant mimosa, whose blossoms smelt divinely, and made arrangements to sit up, in the hope of getting flash-light pictures of lion.

We had an exciting time. We had contrived to get a couple of *angarebs* up into a tree over a *tabarik*, and proceeded to wait. The moon was only about four days old, and there was not much light, but we could see well enough.

There were hyenas, all very busy and intent on their job of hunting. They trotted by with a crisp jog, their footsteps sounding very clearly on the hard

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mud. We could see them plainly, and had a shot at one or two, but they were not really close enough to aim at with accuracy.

I almost fell out of the tree when first I climbed to my *angareb*. I felt that awful dizzy sensation that one gets when looking down from a great height. It was absurd to feel so, because we were, of necessity, not far from the ground, but you know the feeling that springs up your legs, making them *and* your tummy feel painful and jellied. C.T. was able to snooze some of the time, not being possessed with strange devils as I am. It was very beautiful there, with the sweeping leafless branches of the tree above our heads. A great milky owl visited us, and flew with persistency straight within an inch of us before diving suddenly away. We were probably in his own special home-tree, and he must have been puzzled and amazed to find us in occupation after he returned from his hunt for mice and things for dinner.

A leopard and his mate, screened by a bush, had a great argument close to us. He snarled a long, throaty, gurgling growl, and she spat in the approved manner. All this was very entertaining, but they did not show themselves. I looked down the trunk of our tree, wondering if they were coming up into it to spend the night. Anyhow, they didn't, and moved out of hearing. Lions crossed a patch of bare ground a good twenty-five yards away, and we heard them snarling in a chatty, family way, but they came no closer and soon went off. We heard them again at about three in the morning

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*koraking*¹ about a mile away. That, however, was the only suggestion of lions we had all night long. I got more cramped as the hours passed, and although I wanted most desperately to sleep, I didn't, because I knew that if something disturbed me I'd wake with a great jump, and fall off the *angareb* and break my neck!

At last the early dawn came, and we went back to camp to bed. I almost fell into the well at the *tabarik*, but C.T. saved me by a short hair. It was dark—the moon having set. Round the *tabarik* under our tree it had been just light enough to enable us to see lions if any had come.

Errol had gone with Hassan to Abd el Sid, and had sat up there, also over some *tabariks*, but I did not hear whether or not he had been successful, because he got into camp long after C.T. and I, and crept into his bed after I was asleep.

Next morning we heard news of the man Errol had sent off on horseback to Nyala. He had had the greatest adventure. He started in the evening, and had gone only a few miles by the light of the moon when two lions jumped out of the bush and commenced to chase him. His horse was frightened and quickened its pace. The lions, of course, did likewise. The man was torn terribly by thorn branches, in his headlong flight, and his back was bleeding badly. He made jabs with his long spear at the lions which ran at the horse's heels, but couldn't reach them.

Finally one nipped at the horse's flank, which

¹ Shouting.

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made him rear up and throw the man, who was promptly attacked by one lion, while the other followed the horse, which bolted madly. The man, although badly clawed, drove the lion off somehow, and managed to get back to his *ferik*.¹ The horse was never found. The same messenger insisted on having another shot at getting through with the letter to Nyala on another horse, which I considered was plucky. It was true that he was only badly scratched, but I should want to lie up and be cosseted if a lion were to have a scrap with me! The Fellata have more 'guts'—the word may be coarse, but it's expressive—than the Habbania.

We rested most of the day, and sat up in the tree again the next night, but saw only hyenas. C.T. and I spent the whole night protecting a goat which we had tied up, thinking that he would attract lions by his cries. But the goat merely went to sleep, and the hyenas, smelling him when they came to drink, darted at him. We pelted them with lumps of hard mud to keep them off. One hyena got two lovely hits from both of us at the same time, and bolted for his life!

Undeterred by our failure, we resolved to go out once again to try our luck, and Errol proposed to visit Abd el Sid and sit up there; but we were forced to the conclusion that the Arabs were liars. There were not many lions at that place. They could be heard, far up the Bul-Bul, but that was all! We all felt a little hot behind the eyes. Peering out into semi-darkness is trying.

¹ Tents.

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It proved to be a long, long night, and again we had no luck. We *heard* lions at dawn, and of course loads of hyenas.

We got back to camp next morning, when Achmed told us the welcome news that M. had sent a car, adding that the driver, unable to find the place last night, had camped somewhere on the road. The *askari* had come on, but the silly fellow had not brought M.'s letter. He went back for it, and incidentally to bring the car. M. *was* a good friend. He had sent, absolutely pronto, to help us. Achmed divulged gradually more scraps of information—four tubes had also been sent—*or* tyres, he didn't know which! We began to feel that we might get our old bus into Nyala after all, but our car having "ten feet," as the Arabs say (Morris six-wheeler, double wheels behind), we feared we should meet with more tyre trouble before we got through.

So much for serious matters. Among the amenities was a little squirrel, who came and chattered at me. He was a friendly little soul, and that morning, after I went to bed, he came down the tree at my head and stood and made signs with his head and hands, calling me some sort of names—I think friendly ones. Then, having awakened me to his satisfaction, he scampered off in the branches. He was a tiny grey thing, with a fine tail, although it was not as bushy as that of an English squirrel.

At four o'clock that afternoon our kit, after much trouble—because the Fellata hadn't any bulls available—had been taken to the relieving car, on the

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other side of the Bul-Bul, and we were ready to leave. It had been decided that C.T. was to stay behind and bring our own car on after the tubes had been fitted into the tyres; Errol and I were to go on in M.'s car. We were thus ready to leave when a Fellata came in and said that a lioness had been seen at Abd el Sid. Errol immediately jumped on to a horse, raced off, came back two hours later, and murmured, when asked, "Yes, I got her."

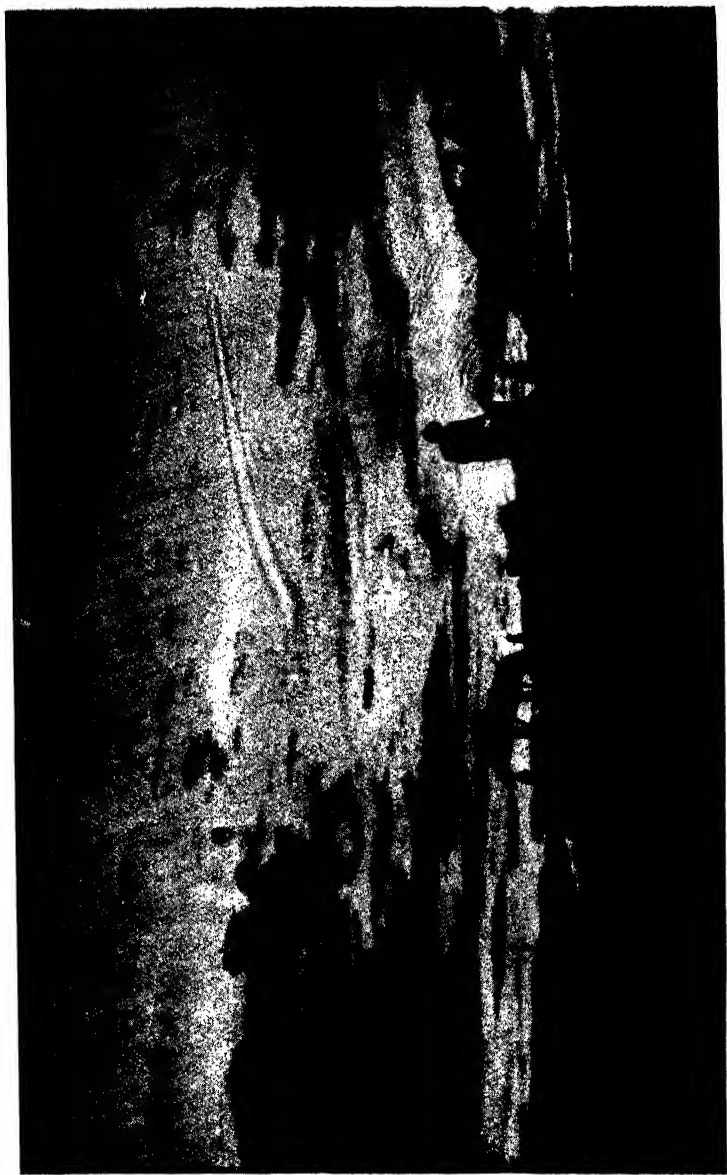
He had seen 'her'—for she was a lioness—feeding on a baboon on a bank of the Bul-Bul, her half-grown cub squatting close beside her. Espying Errol on the sand-bed of the river, she swung round, then sat down, and was swishing her tail when he fired. She sprang up into the air and fell, shot through the heart, in the grass.

After that interlude we left C.T. to follow us later, and began a comic journey which lasted all night.

The native driver of that poor, poor new Ford lorry! I calculated it would want a complete new gear-box, new wheels, chassis, and body within a month! He stamped on the accelerator when he ought to have put on the brake, and changed gear with a sickening bang and the most awful 'scrooping.'

All the native drivers, with but a few exceptions, are like that.

We reached Nyala just before dawn, and found M., looking all sleepy after being dragged out of bed at that unearthly hour, anxious to know what had happened to us.



EARLY MORNING SILHOUETTE



JUST FOR FUN !

LIONS

It was lovely to be in Nyala, and to be looked after so nicely, and be fussed over. The day sped by, and we had a topping little dinner-party that night. But I was perturbed at the non-arrival of C.T. I wondered where he had got to. I was terrified to think that possibly the car would not go on the new tubes, which were smallish, and that he had been forced to walk, or that something worse had befallen him.

However, he got in about 10.30 the following day. He had seen two lions on the road, and shot one of them.

There was more hospitality. We dined with A.C., the dear, and danced, if you please! The 'chaps' danced with me, and with each other too! It was grand fun, and lovely for us after our lonely, hardish time.

And the following day there were more festivities. Everything was so delightful that I began to wonder whether I could go back fifty odd miles over the foul road which we had just covered and try for more lion pictures. The sand, deep and heavy all the way, was too fresh in my memory to be inviting.

But we did go back.

The following day we lunched with Captain MacM., after waiting for two aeroplanes, which were due to arrive from Khartoum—a great event. Wireless messages to say that something was wrong, and that they couldn't land, had been received, and another came to say that they were due. But we had to push off; we couldn't wait longer.

We slept on the road, and arrived at Um Gaat

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at lunch-time. It was a sweet journey—fifty miles over thick, loose sand on dud tubes and tyres—and the heat was frizzling. C.T. and Errol went off at once to fix up their flash-cameras for a night's work at a spot four or five miles away. Again we were going to sit up and try to get flash-pictures of lions.

In the meantime, while waiting for a promising night, we had a day at filming. We took a lot of 'expedition' film, and it was interesting work. We re-enacted that bit of exciting buffalo 'stuff' which happened when Errol was photographing at the Shaleika. C.T. filmed it this time with me crouching by the tree watching Errol slide with his camera down the ant-hill to the "buff buffs." Our satisfaction when that job of work was accomplished was somewhat diluted when we discovered that we could not use the car at all! The last tube had burst! I nearly burst into tears. Nobody knew how long we should be delayed, the heat was terrific, and I could feel myself cracking.

Of course other things went wrong too. Errol sat up that night, and saw three lions, but the flash connexions didn't work! Disappointment seemed to be piling on disappointment. Should we ever get those blessed lions?

C.T. and I took our turn at sitting up, and although the whole apparatus had been carefully overhauled, we immediately realized that the wretched flash, wouldn't work again. There seemed to be a blight on that picture we wanted so badly. We could not imagine how the connexions had gone wrong again.

LIONS

And lions came! I shot at two of them. I didn't want to shoot, but thought I ought to try to bag one. We wanted *photographs*, not dead or wounded lions.

It was very dark, and when I fired I could only aim at a dark shape against the *tabarik*. I hit it, for we heard a cough and a grunt, and then the shape disappeared somewhere behind us, and we heard no more of it.

Half an hour later I shot at another, but missed, and it dashed away in front of us across the water-course.

Both had come galloping up to the *tabarik*, making a noise like cattle with padded hoofs. The first had just grabbed the dead goat and dashed with it into the bush, but the other had stopped to drink. He drank like a huge cat. I hoped the Arabs would find the wounded one before the vultures did. I think he was shot through the lungs.

Other lions came later, but more quietly. Hyenas came too, and when the moon appeared we could see them flitting about like shadows. They looked lighter when they came close and drank. Both lions and hyenas were cautious. They lapped a bit and waited, looked round, and then drank again. Hyenas drink like dogs, making a sound quite different from that made by lions.

Next day the Arabs tracked down the wounded lion, but halted when they discovered traces of his blood in some dense bushes. Farther than that they would not go, fearing that the animal was not dead, and being reluctant to take a chance of stumbling

SUDAN SAND

unexpectedly upon him in that thick undergrowth. I hated the thought of having hurt the poor beast, and hoped to hear definitely that he was dead. Unfortunately I never obtained another scrap of information concerning him, so he must remain for ever unclaimed by me.

We had sent to Nyala for fresh tubes to enable us to plough and plunge our way back, and it was with unfeigned joy that I hailed their arrival. We packed up and began our long trek homeward. Nyala was the first halt, and there I added one more to my stock of pleasant recollections of the place.

We had some amusing and extremely exciting hunting there. We hunted like mad things, both ponies and 'hounds,' when off we all went, chasing the nimble hare. The 'hounds' kept on falling off, and we had to bellow to keep them keen. We had several great runs, the fastest of going—over bushes (thorn bushes!), ant-hills and rocks, and holes—but the ponies leaped like angels—if angels do leap!—and we had some glorious sport. We didn't kill. We saw about four hares.

I feel that I ought to write more about that 'hunt.' Somehow it seemed to be a hilarious finale to our sometimes toilsome wandering. The Master of Hounds possesses a hunting-horn which he is very keen on playing, and practises and practises. He can make grand noises on it. But he was away, settling some native war-ish dispute, and his absence and the consequent lack of hunting music rather spoilt the 'tone' of the affair. But it was a grand hunt.

LIONS

Then we had to ride home like fury before a *haboub*.¹ The dust was so thick when it caught us that we couldn't see more than four or five yards ahead. But again it was grand somehow, and I wanted to yell with joy.

We went to Mac Two's house for lemonade and things, played the gramophone, danced, and laughed, before going home to wash some of the sand out of our skins. Then back we all trooped, and had a buffet supper, which we were supposed to have taken with us to a village some miles out, where we were to have photographed natives dancing. It was we who danced instead. I taught Mac Two how to Charleston—of all things!—and Errol danced with Captain P., while C.T., who refuses to dance, toyed with some food. It was a good night.

¹ Dust-storm.

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST STAGES

WE went on our homeward way, *via* El Fasher. There was time to think over what we had done. We had certainly struck some bad patches, but, taking one thing with another, we realized that we had had more amazingly good luck than bad.

We had obtained all the daylight game photographs we wanted, both still and cine—more, in fact, than we had ever hoped to get—and that, we felt, amply repaid us for all we had experienced in the making of them.

Our picture was completed; our work was done! It was good to know that we were going home.

Still, when we were actually on our way, we became just a little melancholy. Our thoughts dwelt on the joyous times we had known, rather than upon the bad ones, but we felt more than a little sad at leaving all our good and faithful servants, to whom we had become very attached. Wistful thoughts came to me of Kima, my little monkey, who had shared all our adventures for so many years.

We found all our kit, which had been sent in advance of us by bull *hamla*, waiting for us at El Obeid, where we said "Good-bye" to the car—I purposely omit any account of the 'sticks' we experienced on that final stage of our journeyings. We wasted no time in getting our cameras, film,

THE LAST STAGES

and our personal effects and ourselves dispatched to Khartoum, where we had a pleasant halt, and to Port Sudan, whence we sailed.

It was a great change for us to embark on the boat and see so much water round us! And I was, of course, very interested to see so many feminine creatures again, all looking very attractive in their pretty frocks.

We watched the African coast for a long time after the ship sailed, and for days after we caught glimpses of it, as if it were reluctant to part from us. Certainly we were going home, but there was sadness as well as gladness in our minds. We stood together one evening and watched the golden sun set on the receding coast. The blues and pinks and golds of ineffable beauty of that evening will remain with me always. It was an end, but I felt also that it was another beginning as I whispered "Good-bye."

Then England—and grey November days. The trees stand stark, and spread blackened leafless arms to the sky. There is smoke, and blue mists, and blurred lights, and grey veiled fairies seem to play in the towers among the distant trees. But there comes to me a great longing for things which, for a season, are gone. Memories and dreams come stealing into my heart when I think again of far-away hills in Africa.

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